
A SUMMARY VIEW AND EXPLANATION
OF THE
WRITINGS OF THE PROPHETS.

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A

SUMMARY VIEW AND EXPLANATION
OF THE
WRITINGS OF THE PROPHETS;

Consisting of

- I. PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS and GENERAL RULES,**
for understanding the Prophetic Style.
- II. A PARTICULAR ACCOUNT of each BOOK and CHAPTER,**
as they lie in order.

IN WHICH

The general stile of each Prophet is characterized; the beauty and sublimity of particular passages remarked; the change of persons or speakers, the transition from one part of the subject to another, and the connexion and scope of the whole pointed out; improvements on the translation where they seem to be of most consequence taken notice of; with illustrations of the customs, manners, and circumstances to which the sacred writers occasionally allude, and the application of their prophecies to those events to which they are supposed to refer.

The whole being intended

To make those Divine compositions intelligible, useful, and agreeable
to readers of every description.

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SUMMARY VIEW AND EXPLANATION
OF THE
WRITINGS OF THE PROPHETS

I. PARALLEL OF THE WRITINGS OF THE PROPHETS
for understanding the Prophecies

II. A PARALLEL OF THE WRITINGS OF THE PROPHETS



The general aim of this work is to present a summary view of the writings of the prophets, and to explain the prophecies in a manner that is accessible to all. The work is divided into two parts: the first part contains a parallel of the writings of the prophets, and the second part contains a parallel of the prophecies.

To make this work more useful, it is accompanied by a series of questions and answers, which are designed to help the reader to understand the prophecies.

BY JOHN GUMPERT, D.D.
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

AD 1750
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1750

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge, having lately published a Gaelic translation of the writings of the Prophets, were of opinion that it would be proper to have it accompanied with a brief explanation of that part of scripture. With a view to this, the translator drew up the following observations. The idea of publishing them in the English language was afterwards suggested by some of his friends who were so obliging as to peruse them. In this language, indeed, we have already many excellent commentaries on scripture. But they are for the most part, or altogether, of such a size and price, as to confine the use of them to the fewest number. The poor want means to purchase; the rich leisure or inclination to peruse them. The propriety of constructing such books, therefore, on a smaller scale, so as to render them more generally useful, is obvious. If so many of the scattered rays can be collected into one point, as may enable the reader of any portion or chapter of scripture to see, as it were with a glance of the eye, the scope and meaning of the whole, with the connexion of the several parts—if the meaning of the sacred writers can be exhibited in its own native, noble, and beautiful simplicity, freed from every false gloss of human system by which it is frequently disguised, and from every load of extraneous matter with which it is frequently oppressed—a most important object would be gained indeed. The sacred volume would be more read and better understood; its influence on the heart would be more powerful, and its effect on the human conduct more manifest. How far the following attempt may be conducive to these desirable ends, or how far it may be proper to extend the same plan to other parts of scripture, it is the part of the Public alone to judge.—The author has only to add, that he has been careful to derive every necessary information from the most respectable authorities. He has consulted the most approved Commentators in our own, and several in other languages. He has

particularly availed himself, on many occasions, of the assistance furnished by those later writers, whose labours have cast so much light on the greater part of the Prophetic writings, such as Bp. Lowth, Mr. Blayney, Bp. Newcome, Bp. Newton, and Dr. Kennicott.—If any reader should wish for a more critical knowledge of this part of sacred writ, he may derive it from these learned authors, and from Houbigant, Michaelis, and Vitringa, or, if more of practical uses, inferences, reflections, and improvements should be desiderated, the writers of larger Commentaries will amply supply them. But the object aimed at here was brevity, no less than utility and plainness.

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PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

PROPHETIC STILE.

THE writings of the Prophets, the most sublime and beautiful in the world, from their not being more generally understood, lose much of that usefulness and effect which they are so well-calculated to produce on the souls of men. Many prophecies are somewhat dark, till events explain them. They are, besides, delivered in such lofty and figurative terms, and with such frequent allusions to the customs and manners of times and places the most remote, that ordinary readers cannot, without some help, be supposed capable of understanding them. What is not understood is seldom read: or, if at any time it be, it is only as a task, begun without inclination, gone through without pleasure, and ended without profit. It must therefore be of use to make the language of prophecy as intelligible as may be, by explaining those images and figures of speech in which it most frequently abounds: and this generally may be done, even when the prophecies themselves are obscure.

Some prophecies seem as if it were not intended that they should be clearly understood before they are fulfilled. As they relate to different periods, they may have been intended for exciting the attention of mankind, from time to time, both to Providence and to Scripture, and to furnish every age with new evidence of the truth of Divine revelation; by which means they serve the same purpose to the last ages of the world that miracles did to the first. Whereas, if they had been in every respect clear and obvious from the beginning, this wise purpose had been in a great measure defeated. Curiosity, industry, and attention, would at once be at an end; or, by being too easily gratified, would be little exercised.

Besides, a great degree of obscurity is necessary to some prophecies before they can be fulfilled; and if not fulfilled, the consequence would not be so beneficial to mankind. Thus, many of the ancient prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, had a manifest relation to the remoter destruction by the Romans, as well as to the nearer one by the Chaldeans. Had the Jews perceived this, which was not indeed clear enough till the event explained it, they would probably have wished to have remained for ever in their captivity at Babylon, rather than expose themselves or their offspring, a second time, to a destruction so dreadful as that which they had already experienced. In like manner, the prophecies relating to the Messiah had a view both to his first and to his second coming; they spoke of him as suffering,

and yet conquering and reigning. The Jews, led by their situation first to wish, and then to expect a conquering Messiah, did not clearly see the order of the prophecy, and that it behoved Christ first to suffer, and then to enter into his glory; and therefore, ignorantly and in unbelief, they were instrumental in fulfilling the prophecy, by shedding that blood which was to atone for the sins of mankind: But this they could never have been so impious as to have attempted, had they fully known that they were crucifying the Lord of glory.

With respect to our times, by far the greatest number of prophecies relate to events which are now past; and, therefore, a sufficient acquaintance with history, and with the language and style of prophecy, is all that is requisite in order to understand them. Some prophecies, however, relate to events still future: and these too may be understood in general, although some particular circumstances connected with them, may remain obscure till they are fulfilled. If prophecies were not capable of being understood in general, we should not find the Jews so often blamed, in this respect, for their ignorance and want of discernment. That they did actually understand many of them, when they chose to search the Scriptures, we know. Daniel understood from the prophecies of Jeremiah the time at which the captivity in Babylon was to be at an end; and the scribes knew from Micah, and told Herod, where the Messiah was to be born. A very little attention might have enabled them in the same manner

to understand others, as they probably did: such as the 70 weeks of Daniel; the destruction of the Babylonian empire, and of the other three that were to succeed; and also the ruin of the people and places around them, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, Sidon, Philistia, Egypt, and Idumea. Perhaps, indeed, a few enigmatical circumstances might have been annexed, which could not be understood till they were accomplished; but the general tenor of the prophecies they could be at no loss to understand. With regard to prophecies still future, we are in a similar situation. We know in general, that the Jews will be gathered from their dispersions, restored to their own land, and converted to Christianity; that the fulness of the Gentiles will likewise come in, that Antichrist, Gog, and Magog, and all the enemies of the church will be destroyed; after which the gospel will remarkably flourish, and be more than ever glorified. But several circumstances connected with those general events must probably remain in the dark, till their accomplishment will clearly explain them.

But this degree of obscurity which sometimes attends prophecy, does not always proceed from the circumstances or subject; it frequently proceeds from the highly poetical and figurative stile in which prophecy is for the most part conveyed, and of which it will be proper to give some account. To speak of all the rhetorical figures with which the Prophets adorn their stile, would lead us into a field too wide, and would be more the province of the rhetorician

than of the commentator. It will be sufficient for our purpose at present, to attend to the most common of them, consisting of Allegory, Parable, and Metaphor; and then to consider the sources from which the Prophets most frequently borrow their images in those figures, and the sense which they wish to convey by them*.

By *allegory*, the first of the figures mentioned, is meant that mode of speech in which the writer or speaker means to convey a different idea from what the words in their obvious and primary signification bear. Thus, "Break up your fallow-ground, and sow not among thorns," (Jer. iv. 3.) is to be understood not of tillage, but of repentance. And these words, "Thy towers have brought thee into great waters: the east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas," (Ezek. xxvii. 6.) allude not to the fate of a ship, but of a city.

To this figure, the *parable*, in which the Prophets frequently speak, is nearly allied. It consists in the application of some feigned narrative to some real truth, which might have been less striking, or more disagreeable, if expressed in plain terms. Such is the following one of Isaiah, (v. 1, 2.) "My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill. And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild

* Vid. Lowth de Sacr. Poet. Heb. passim. et Houbigant in præf. ad proph.

grapes." The 7th verse tells us that this vineyard was the house of Israel, which had so ill-requited the favour which God had shewn it.

There is, besides, another kind of allegory not uncommon with the Prophets, called *mystical allegory*, or *double prophecy*. Thus, it is said of Eliakim, (Isa. xxii. 22.) "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; and he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open." In the first and obvious sense, the words relate to Eliakim, but in the secondary or mystical sense, to the Messiah. Instances of the same kind are frequent in those prophecies that relate to David, Zerubabel, Cyrus, and other types of Christ. In the first sense, the words relate to the type; in the second, to the antitype. The use of this allegory, however, is not so free or so frequent as that of the former. It is generally confined to things most nearly connected with the Jewish religion; with Israel, Sion, Jerusalem, and its kings and rulers: or such as were most opposite to these; Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, Idumea, and the like. In the former kind of allegory the primitive meaning is dropped, and the figurative only is retained: in this, both the one and the other are reserved; and this it is that constitutes the difference.

But of all the figures used by the Prophets, the most frequent is the *metaphor*, by which words are transferred from their primitive and plain, to a secondary and figurative meaning. This figure, common in all poetry, and in all languages, is of indispensable necessity

in Scripture; which, having occasion to speak of divine and spiritual matters, could do it only by terms borrowed from sensible and material objects. Hence it is that the sentiments, actions, and corporeal parts, not only of man, but also of inferior creatures, are ascribed to God himself; it being otherwise impossible for us to form any conceptions of his pure essence and incommunicable attributes. But though the Prophets, partly from necessity, and partly from choice, are thus profuse in the use of metaphors, they do not appear, like other writers, to have the liberty of using them as every one's fancy directed. The same set of images, however diversified in the manner of applying them, is always used both in allegory and metaphor, to denote the same subjects, to which they are in a manner appropriated. This peculiar characteristic of the Hebrew poetry might perhaps be owing to some rules taught in the prophetic schools, which did not allow the same latitude in this respect as other poetry. Whatever it may be owing to, the uniform manner in which the Prophets apply these images, tends greatly to illustrate the prophetic style; and, therefore, it will be proper now to consider the sources from which those images are most frequently derived, and the subjects and ideas which they severally denote. These sources may be classed under four heads; Natural, Artificial, Religious, and Historical.

I. The first and most copious, as well as the most pleasing source of images in the prophetic writings, as in all other poetry, is Nature; and the principal ima-

ges drawn from nature, together with their application, are the following:

The sun, moon, and stars, the highest objects in the natural world, figuratively represent kings, queens, and princes or rulers; the highest in the world politic: "The moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed," Isa. xxiv. 23. "I will cover the heavens, and make the stars thereof dark: I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light," Ezek. xxxii. 7.

Light and darkness are used figuratively for joy and sorrow, prosperity and adversity: "We wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness," Isa. lix. 9. An uncommon degree of light, denotes an uncommon degree of joy and prosperity; and *vice versa*: "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold," Isa. xxx. 26.—The same metaphors are likewise used to denote knowledge and ignorance: "If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them," Isa. viii. 20. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light," Isa. ix. 2.

Dew, moderate rains, gentle streams, and running waters, denote the blessings of the gospel: "Thy dew is as the dew of herbs," Isa. xxvi. 19. "He shall come unto us as the rain," Hosea vii. 3. "I will water it every moment," Isa. xxvii. 3. "I will pour water on him that is thirsty," Isa. xlv. 3.

Immoderate rains, on the other hand, hail, floods, deep waters, torrents, and inundations, denote judg-

ments and destruction: "I will rain upon him an overflowing rain and great hailstones," Ezek. xxxviii. 22. "Waters rise up out of the north, and shall overflow the land," Jer. xlvi. 2.

Fire also, and the east wind, parching and hurtful, frequently denote the same: "They shall cast thy choice cedars into the fire," Jer. xxii. 7. "He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind," Isa. xxvii. 8.

Wind in general is often taken in the same sense: "The wind shall eat up all thy pleasures," Jer. xxii. 22. Sometimes it is put for any thing empty or fallacious, as well as hurtful: "The Prophets shall become wind," Jer. v. 13. "They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind," Hof. viii. 7.

Lebanon and Carmel; the one remarkable for its height and stately cedars, was the image of majesty, strength, or any thing very great or noble: "He shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one," Isa. x. 34. "The Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon," Ezek. xxxi. 3. The other mountain, (Carmel) fruitful, and abounding in vines and olives, denoted beauty and fertility: "The glory of Lebanon shall be given it, the excellency of Carmel," Isa. xxxv. 2. The vine alone is a frequent image of the Jewish Church: "I had planted thee a noble vine," Jer. ii. 21.

Rams, and bullocks of Bashan, lions, eagles, sea-monsters, or any animal of prey, are figures frequently used for cruel and oppressive tyrants and conquerors: "Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, which op-

press the poor," Amos iv. 1. "The lion is come up from his thicket," Jer. iv. 7. "A great eagle came unto Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar," Ezek. xvii. 3. "Thou art as a whale in the seas," Ezek. xxxii. 2. "The unicorn shall come down,—and their land shall be soaked with blood," Isa. xxxiv. 7.

II. The ordinary occupations and customs of life, with the few *arts* practised at the time, were another source from which the Prophets derived many of their figures; particularly,

From husbandry in all its parts, and from its implements: "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow-ground," Hof. x. 12. "Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe," Joel iii. 13. "I am pressed under you, as a wain under a load of sheaves," Amos ii. 13. Threshing was performed in various ways, (mentioned Isa. xxviii. 24. &c.) which furnish a variety of images denoting punishment: "Arise, and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thine horn iron, and thy hoofs brass, &c." Micah iv. 13. The operation was performed on rising grounds, where the chaff was driven away by the wind, while the grain remained; a fit emblem of the fate of the wicked, and of the salvation of the just: "Behold I will make thee a new threshing-instrument having teeth; thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and thou shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them," Isa. xli. 15, 16.

The vintage and wine-press also furnished many images, obvious enough in their application: "The press is full, the fats overflow, for their wickedness is great, Joel iii. 13. "I have trod the wine-press alone.— I will tread down the people in mine anger," Isa. lxiii. 3. &c. As the vintage was gathered with shouting and rejoicing, the ceasing of the vintage-shouting is frequently one of the figures that denote misery and desolation: "None shall tread with shouting; their shouting shall be no shouting," Jer. xlviii. 33.

From the occupation of tending cattle, we have many images: "Wo unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture," Jer. xxiii. 1. The people are the flock, teachers and rulers the pastors: "Israel is a scattered sheep, the lions have driven him away." "As a shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, &c." Amos iii. 12.—Some of the images derived from husbandry, tending cattle, &c. may perhaps appear mean to us, though not to the Jews, whose manner of life was simple and plain, and whose greatest men, (such as Moses, David, Gideon, &c.) were often husbandmen and shepherds. Accordingly, the Messiah himself is frequently described under the character of a shepherd.

It was customary in deep mournings to shave the head and beard, to retire to the house-tops, (which in those countries were flat, and furnished with little chambers adapted to the purposes of devotion or of sequestered grief,) also to sing laments or dirges at funerals, and to accompany them with a mourn-

ful sort of music; and from these and the like circumstances, images are frequently borrowed by the Prophets to denote the greatest danger, and the deepest distress. "Mine heart shall sound for Moab like pipes,"—"Every head shall be bald, and every beard clipt—there shall be lamentation on all the house-tops of Moab," Jer. xlviii. 36, 37, 38. Isa. xv. 2, 3.

The mode of burying in the Jewish sepulchres, or "fides of the pit," and their Hades, or state of the dead, supplied many images of the same kind. See Obs. on Isa. xiv. and Ezek. xxvi. 20.

According to the barbarous custom of those times, conquerors drove their captives before them, almost naked, and exposed to the intolerable heat of the sun, and the inclemencies of the weather; they afterwards employed them frequently in grinding at the hand-mill, (water-mills not being then invented;) hence nakedness, and grinding at the mill, and sitting on the ground, (the posture in which they wrought,) express captivity: "Descend and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon—take the millstones—thy nakedness shall be uncovered, &c" Isa. xvii. 1.—3.

The marriage-relation supplied metaphors to express the relation or covenant between God and his people. On the other hand, adultery, infidelity to the marriage-bed, &c. denoted any breach of covenant with God, particularly the love and worship of idols: "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you," Jer. iii. 14. "There were two women, the daughters of one mother, and they

committed whoredoms,—with their idols have they committed adultery, &c.” Ezek. xxiii. 2, 3.—37.

The debility and stupefaction caused by intoxicating liquors suggested very apt images to express the terrible effects of the divine judgments on those who are the unhappy objects of them: “Thou shalt be filled with drunkenness—with the cup of thy sister Samaria,” Ezek. xxiii. 33.

From the method of refining metals in the furnace, images are often borrowed to denote the judgments inflicted by God on his people, with a view to cleanse them from their sins, as metal from its dross: “Israel is—dross in the midst of the furnace,” Ezek. xxii. 18. “He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver,” Mal. iii. 3.

Among the other few arts from which the Hebrew poets derive some of their images, are those of the fuller and potter, Mal. iii. 2. &c. Jer. xviii. 1. &c. of which the application is obvious. No less so is that of images derived from fishing, fowling, and the implements belonging to them; the hook, net, pit, snare, &c. which generally denote captivity or destruction: “I will send for many fishers, and they shall fish them; and—for many hunters, and they shall hunt them,—for their iniquity is not hid from mine eyes,” Jer. xvi. 16, 17. “I will put hooks to thy jaws,” Ezek. xxix. 4. “Fear, and the pit, and the snare are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth,” Isa. xxiv. 17.

A few images are derived from building, as when the Messiah is denoted by a foundation and corner-stone,

Isa. xxviii. 16. The next verse describes the rectitude of judgment by metaphors borrowed from the line and plummet; and by building with precious stones, is denoted a very high degree of prosperity, whether applied to church or state, Isa. liv. 11, 12.

III. Religion, and things connected with it, furnished many images to the sacred poets.

From the temple and its pompous service, from the tabernacle, Shechinah, mercy-seat, &c. are derived a variety of images chiefly serving to denote the glory of the Christian church, the excellency of its worship, God's favour towards it, and his constant presence with it; the Prophets speaking to the Jews in terms accommodated to their own ideas: "And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the Glory shall be a covering," Isa. iv. 5. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean," Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

The ceremonial law, and especially its distinctions between things clean and unclean, furnished a number of images, all obvious in their application: "Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings," Isa. i. 16. "Their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman," Ezek. xxxvi. 17.

The killing of sacrifices, and feasting upon them, serve as metaphors for slaughter: "The Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozra," Isa. xxxiv. 6. Ezek. xxxix. 17.

The Pontifical robes, which were very splendid,

suggested several images expressive of the glory of both the Jewish and Christian church: "I clothed thee with broidered work, &c." Ezek. xvi. 10. "He clothed me with the garments of salvation," Isa. lxi. 10. The Prophets wore a rough upper garment, false prophets wore the like, in imitation of true ones; and to this there are frequent allusions: "Neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive," Zech. xiii. 4.

From the pots, and other vessels and utensils of the temple, are likewise borrowed a few metaphors, obvious enough without explanation: "Every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness," Zech. xiv. 21. Some of these may not perhaps appear so dignified to us as they must have done to the Jews, to whom their religion, their temple, and every thing connected with either, must have appeared venerable and noble.

The Prophets have likewise many images that allude to the idolatrous rites of the neighbouring nations, to their groves and high places, (Isa. xxvii. 9.) and to the worship paid to their idols, Baal, Moloch, Chemosh, Gad, Meni, Astaroth, Tammuz, &c. Ezek. viii. 10.—14.

IV. Many of the metaphors and images used by the Prophets are likewise borrowed from History, especially sacred.

From the fall of angels: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning," Isa. xiv. 12. "Thou art the anointed cherub,—thou wast upon the holy mountain of God," Ezek. xxviii. 14.

And from the fall of man. "Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God," ver. 13.

From Chaos: "I beheld the earth, and, lo! it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light," Jer. iv. 23. "He shall stretch over it the line of devastation, and the plummet of emptiness," Isa. xxxiv. 11.

From the deluge: "The windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake," Isa. xxiv. 18.

From the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah: "And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch," Isa. xxxiv. 9.—Also from the destruction of the Hivites and Amorites, &c. Isa. xvii. 9.

The Exodus, and deliverance from Egypt, is frequently used to shadow forth other great deliverances. "Thus saith the Lord, who maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters, &c." Isa. xliii. 16.—19.—xi. 15, 16.—li. 9, 10. &c.

From the descent on Sinai: "Behold the Lord cometh forth out of his place, and will come down and tread on the high places of the earth; and the mountains shall be molten under him," Micah i. 3, 4.

From the resurrection, the end of the world, and the last judgment, are derived many images of which the application is natural and obvious: "Thy dead men shall live, with my dead body shall they arise,—awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust," &c. Isa.

xxvi. 19.—“And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their host shall fall down as a leaf falleth from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree,” Isa. xxxiv. 4.

The foregoing account of the images which most frequently occur in the writings of the Prophets may be of considerable use in studying their stile. But as a thorough knowledge of this must be allowed to be of the highest importance, a few *general remarks* are further added, although some part of them may appear to be superseded by what has been already observed.

1. Although the Prophets use words so frequently in a figurative or metaphorical meaning, yet we ought not, without necessity, to depart from the primitive and original sense of language: And such a necessity there is, when the plain and original sense is less proper, less suitable to the subject and context, or contrary to other scriptures.

2. By images borrowed from the world natural, the Prophets frequently understand something analogous in the world politic. Thus, the sun, moon, stars, and heavenly bodies, denote kings, queens, rulers, and persons in great power; their increase of splendor, denotes increase of prosperity; their darkening, setting, or falling, denotes a reverse of fortune, or the entire ceasing of that power or kingdom to which they refer. Great earthquakes, and the shaking of

heaven and earth, denote the commotion and overthrow of kingdoms; and the beginning or end of the world, their rise or ruin.

3. The cedars of Lebanon, oaks of Bashan, fir-trees, and other stately trees of the forest, denote kings, princes, potentates, and persons of the highest rank; briars and thorns, the common people, or those of the meanest order.

4. High mountains and lofty hills, in like manner, denote kingdoms, republics, states, and cities; towers and fortresses, signify defenders and protectors; ships of Tarshish, merchants, or commercial people; and the daughter of any capital or mother-city, the lesser cities, or suburbs around it. Cities never conquered, are further stiled virgins.

5. The Prophets likewise describe kings and kingdoms by their ensigns; as Cyrus and the Romans by an eagle; the King of Macedon by a goat; and the King of Persia by a ram: these being the figures on their respective standards.

6. The Prophets, in like manner, borrow some of their images from ancient hieroglyphics, which they take in their usual acceptation: thus, a star was the emblem of a god or hero; a horn, the emblem of great power or strength; and a rod, the emblem of royalty: and they signify the same in the Prophets.

7. The same prophecies have frequently a double meaning, and refer to different events; the one near, the other remote; the one temporal, the other spiritual, or perhaps eternal.—The Prophets having thus several

events in their eye; their expressions may be partly applicable to one, and partly to another; and it is not always easy to mark the transitions. Thus, the prophecies relating to the first and second restoration of the Jews, and first and second coming of our Lord, are often interwoven together; like our Saviour's own prediction (Mat. xxiv.) concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. What has not been fulfilled in the first, we must apply to the second; and what has been already fulfilled, may often be considered as typical of what still remains to be accomplished.

8. Almost all the prophecies of the Old Testament, whatever view they may have to nearer events, are ultimately to be referred to the New, where only we are to look for their full completion. Thus, Babylon under the Old Testament, was a type of mystical Babylon under the New; and the King of Syria (Antiochus Epiphanes) a type of Antichrist; the temporal enemies of the Jews, types and figures of the spiritual enemies of Christians. We must not, however, expect to find always a mystical meaning in prophecy; and when the near and most obvious meaning is plain, and gives a good sense, we need not, without reason, depart from it, nor be over-curious to look beyond it.

9. In prophecies, as in parables, we are chiefly to consider the scope and design, without attempting too minute an explication of all the poetical images and figures with which the sacred writers use to adorn their style.

10. Prophecies of a general nature are applicable by accommodation to individuals; most of the things that are spoken of the church in general, being no less applicable to its individual members.

11. Prophecies of a particular nature, on the other hand, admit, and often require to be extended. Thus, Edom, Moab, or any of the enemies of God's people, is often put for the whole; what is said of one being generally applicable to the rest.

12. In like manner, what is said to, or of any of God's people, on any particular occasion, is of general application and use; all that stand in the same relation to God, having an interest in the same promises.

13. A cup of intoxicating liquor is frequently used to denote the indignation of God; and the effects of such a cup, the effects of his displeasure.

14. As the covenant of God with his people is represented under the figure of marriage, so their breach of that covenant, especially their idolatry, is represented by whoredom, adultery, and infidelity to the marriage-bed; on which the Prophets sometimes enlarge, to excite detestation of the crime. The epithet *strange*, does likewise, almost always, relate to something connected with idolatry.

15. Persons or nations are frequently said in scripture to be related to those whom they resemble in their life and conduct. In the same manner, men are denoted by animals whose qualities they resemble. A definite number, such as three, four, seven, &c. is

sometimes used by the Prophets for an indefinite, and commonly denotes a great many.

16. In the reckoning of time, a day is used by the Prophets to denote a year; and things still future, to denote their certainty, are spoken of as already past.

17. When the Prophets speak of the last, or latter days, they always mean the days of the Messiah, or the time of the gospel dispensation. *That day* means often the same, and always some period at a distance.

18. When places are mentioned as lying north, south, east, or west, it is generally to be understood of their situation with respect to Judea or Jerusalem, when the context does not plainly restrict the scene to some other place.

19. By the earth (or the word so translated) the Prophets frequently mean the land of Judea; and sometimes (says Sir I. Newton) the great continent of all Asia and Africa, to which they had access by land. By the isles of the sea, on the other hand, they understood the places to which they sailed, particularly all Europe, and probably the islands and sea-coasts of the Mediterranean.

20. The greatest part of the Prophetic writings was first composed in verse, and still retains (notwithstanding all the disadvantages of a literal prose translation,) much of the air and cast of the original, particularly in the division of the lines, and in that peculiarity of Hebrew poetry, by which the sense of one line or couplet so frequently corresponds with that of the other: Thus,

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
 My soul shall be joyful in my God;
 For he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation,
 He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness:
 As a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments
 And as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

Isa. lxi. 10.

Attention to this peculiarity in sacred poetry, will frequently lead to the meaning of many passages in the poetical parts of scripture (in which it perpetually occurs,) as the one line of a couplet, or member of a sentence, is generally a commentary on the other: Thus,

The Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozra,
 And a great slaughter in the land of Idumea;

Isa. xxxiv. 6.

Here the metaphor in the first line is expressed in plain terms in the next: the sacrifice in Bozra means the great slaughter in Idumea, of which Bozra was the capital.

It must be observed that the parallelism is frequently more extended: Thus,

For I will pour out waters on the thirsty,
 And flowing streams upon the dry ground;
 I will pour out my spirit on thy seed,
 And my blessing on thine offspring.

Isa. xlv. 3.

Here the two last lines explain the metaphor in the two preceding.

A PARTICULAR ACCOUNT
OF
EACH BOOK AND CHAPTER,
AS THEY LIE IN ORDER.

ISAIAH.

ISAIAH, who stands in the foremost rank of the Hebrew Prophets, began to exercise his office about 760 years before the Christian æra. In the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, under whom he first prophesied, the kingdom of Judah was in a very flourishing condition. But in the subsequent reign of Ahaz, it was brought to the brink of destruction by the confederate forces of Israel and Syria. In this distress, Ahaz sought aid from the King of Assyria. But this powerful ally, after reducing Israel and Syria, became the enemy of Ahaz, which encouraged the Syrians, Edomites, and Philistines, to renew their depredations. At the same time the impiety of the nation was come to a most enormous height: Idolatry was established in Jerusalem by the King's authority, and the temple itself was made the habitation of idols. But Hezekiah, suc-

ceeding to the throne, restored the worship of the true God, and purged the temple. He also refused to pay the tribute which the Assyrian monarch had imposed on his father Ahaz. This brought on that invasion, of which an account is inserted among the prophecies of Isaiah. After a miraculous deliverance from so great a danger, Hezekiah died in peace, leaving the kingdom in a flourishing condition to his son Manasseh, under whose reign, it is said, Isaiah was put to death, after a faithful discharge of his office for a period of time extending, as some think, to 61 years, but which could not possibly be less than 48. He was contemporary with those other Prophets, Hosea, Joel, Amos, and Micah. His manner of writing is inimitably beautiful and sublime. His images, often borrowed from the appendages of royalty, (which were familiar to him, being one of the royal family,) are elegant and noble; and his prophecies are so clear, minute, and circumstantial, that they might often seem to be rather narratives of things past than predictions of things to come. Of these prophecies, the five first chapters are generally supposed to have been delivered in the reign of Uzziah; the sixth in the reign of Jotham; the following chapters to the fifteenth, in the reign of Ahaz, and the remainder in that of Hezekiah.—Isaiah sets out with remonstrating against the sins of his people, exhorting and encouraging them to repentance, and warning them of their danger, especially from the Babylonian invasion, if they continued impenitent. He is then led by the descent

of the Assyrians to declare the judgments of God concerning that powerful people. From thence he proceeds to prophesy the downfall of several other nations, the enemies of his country, especially the Babylonians. And as the overthrow of this people was connected with an event of the utmost importance to the Jews, their deliverance from a glorious bondage, the Prophet takes occasion to speak of it often, to enlarge on it greatly, and to diversify it with all the rich eloquence and imagery of which he was so great a master. But under the veil of this deliverance, he intimates a much greater, which was to be effected by the Messiah; and seldom does he mention the one without alluding at the same time to the other. Nay, he is often so much enraptured with the prospect of the more distant deliverance, as to lose sight entirely of that which was nearer; and to descant, without veil or allegory, on the Messiah's person, office, character, and kingdom; as may be seen from a more particular view of this evangelical Prophet's writings as they lie in order.

CHAP. I. The prophecy in the first chapter, (to which, as well as to the whole book, the first verse forms a general title,) is an entire piece unconnected with any other.—If it was delivered in the reign of Uzziah, the desolation it describes may allude to the calamities which were occasioned before that time by Jehoshaphat king of Israel (2 Kings xiv. 12—14), or the Prophet may describe those scenes that were still future, as already passing before his eyes. But as pro-

phesies are not always arranged according to the order of time in which they were delivered, it is probable this may have been uttered in the time of Ahaz, (which it suits better than that of either Uzziah or Jotham,) and may refer to the invasion of Rezin and Pekah. There are some, however, who place it still later, and suppose, with a good deal of probability, that it was delivered when Jerusalem was besieged by Sennacherib. But however this be, the chapter contains a severe remonstrance against the ingratitude and corruptions of the Jews of that age, warm exhortations to repentance, heavy threatenings to the impenitent, and (after previous corrections) gracious promises of better times.—More particularly,

The Prophet, with a boldness and majesty becoming the herald of the Most High, begins with calling on the whole creation to attend, when Jehovah speaks, (ver. 2). A charge of gross insensibility and ingratitude is then brought against the Jews, by contrasting their conduct with that of the ox and ass, the most stupid of animals (ver. 3). This leads to an amplification of their guilt (4), highly aggravated by their slighting the chastisements and judgments of God, though repeated till they had been left almost like Sodom and Gomorrah (5—9). The incidental mention of those places leads to an address to the rulers and people of the Jews, (under the character of princes of Sodom and people of Gomorrah,) no less spirited and severe than it is elegant and unexpected (10). The vanity of trusting to the

performance of the outward rites and ceremonies of religion is then exposed (11—15), and the necessity of repentance and reformation is strongly enjoined (16, 17), and urged by the most encouraging promises, as well as by the most awful threatenings (18—20). But neither of these producing the proper effect on that people, who were the Prophet's charge, he bitterly laments their degeneracy (21—23), and concludes with introducing God, declaring his purpose of inflicting such heavy judgments as would entirely cut off the wicked, and excite in the righteous, who should also pass through the furnace, an everlasting shame and abhorrence of every thing connected with idolatry, the source of their misery (24—31).

The whole chapter, in loftiness of sentiment and style, affords a beautiful example of this great Prophet's manner; whose writings, like his lips, are touched with hallowed fire.

II. This and the two following chapters make one section of prophecy. The first five verses of this, foretel the kingdom of the Messiah, and the conversion of the Gentile world. In the remaining part of the chapter is foretold the punishment of the unbelieving Jews, for their idolatrous practices; their self-confidence, and distrust in God; also the destruction of idolatry, in consequence of the establishment of Messiah's kingdom. The description which this chapter contains of the terrible consternation that will seize the wicked, who shall in vain seek for rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of God in the day of his judg-

ments, is beautifully and highly worked up. But to what period these judgments are to be referred is doubtful. Some have applied them to the first, and some to the second coming of our Saviour; some to the destruction of the Jews, and some to the fall of Antichrist. Perhaps we ought not to confine the words to any one of these events exclusively of the rest. The prophecy has, no doubt, been in a great measure fulfilled by the early and astonishing success of the gospel; yet there is every reason to believe, that at least the happy period, so beautifully predicted in verse 4th, is not yet arrived, and that some such signal judgments and revolutions as the Prophet here describes, may be requisite in order to introduce it.

III. The whole of this chapter, with the first verse of the next, is a prophecy of those calamities that should be occasioned by the Babylonian invasion and captivity. These calamities are represented as so great and so general, that even royal honours, in such a state, are so far from being desirable, that hardly any can be got to accept them (1—7). This visitation is then declared to be the consequence of their profanity and guilt; for which the prophet further reproves and threatens them; making, however, a merciful discrimination in favour of the righteous (8—15).

The latter part of the chapter (16—26) is a particular amplification of the distress of the delicate and luxurious daughters of Sion; whose deplorable situation is finely contrasted with their former prosperity and ease.

Some think that this prophecy may likewise refer to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; and it is remarkable, that on a medal struck by Vespasian on that occasion, Jerusalem is represented in the very posture described by the last words of this chapter, under the figure of a disconsolate mother, bewailing the unhappy fate of her children.

IV. The first verse of this chapter (which ought not to have been separated from the preceding) represents the havock occasioned by war, and those other calamities which the Prophet had been describing, as so great, that seven women should be left to one man. The rest of the chapter promises, to the remnant that should escape those severe trials, a restoration to the favour of God, and a share in the blessings of the **BRANCH**, one of the appropriated names of the Messiah.

The great blessings of the gospel are frequently set forth (as in ver. 5) by allusions to the glory and pomp of the Mosaic dispensation.

V. This chapter is unconnected with the preceding or following. The subject (consisting of reproofs and threatenings) resembles that of chap. I. but exceeds it in force, elegance, and variety, and denounces the Babylonian invasion more expressly. Perhaps it may likewise have a further view to the calamities inflicted by the Roman armies. It begins with representing, in a beautiful parable, the tender care of God for his people, and their unworthy returns to his goodness (1—7). The parable or allegory is then dropped, and the Pro-

phet, in plain terms, reproves and threatens them for their wickedness; particularly for their covetousness (8—10), intemperance (11), and inattention to the warnings of Providence (12). Then follows an enumeration of judgments as the necessary consequence.—Captivity and famine appear, with all their horrors (13). Hades (or the grave) like a ravenous monster, opens wide its jaws, and swallows down its myriads (14). Distress lays hold on all ranks (15), and God is glorified in the display of his judgments (16), till the whole land is left desolate; a place for the flocks to range in (17).—The Prophet then pauses, and again resumes his subject, reproving them for several other sins, and threatening them with woes and vengeance (18—24); after which he sums up the whole of his awful denunciation in a very lofty and spirited epiphonema or conclusion. The God of armies, having hitherto corrected to no purpose, is represented, with inimitable majesty, as only giving the hift, and the swarm of nations hasten to his standard. He only intimates his pleasure, and keen, cruel, and resolute, they fly immediately to perform it. Upon a guilty race, unpitied by heaven or by earth, they execute their commission, and leave the land desolate and dark, without one ray of comfort to cheer the horrid gloom.

VI. This chapter, by a particular designation of Isaiah to his office (1—8), introduces, with the more solemnity, a declaration of the whole tenor of God's conduct in regard to his people, who, on account of their unbelief and impenitence, were to be

long given up to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart (9, 10), and visited with such calamities as would leave their country desolate (11, 12). He adds, however, that under their repeated destruction (by the Chaldeans, Romans, &c.) a small remnant should still be preserved as a seed, from which God will raise a people, to whom he will at length make good all his promises.

The prophetic vision recorded in this chapter is peculiarly glorious. The most pompous machinery of the Greek and Latin poets is as much inferior to it as earth is to heaven, or things human to things divine. Only observe—"the *personages*; they are the very highest in the scale of created beings, the dominions and principalities of heaven:—their *attitude*; they stand before the throne of Jehovah, veiling their faces from the beams of uncreated glory, too bright for the seraphim themselves to endure:—their *action*; the most rapturous songs of praise:—their manner of *expression*; by reiterated and reverential acclamations of holy! holy! holy!—the *effects* of this awful presence, and of these august sounds; the posts of the door shake, the ponderous and magnificent pillars of brass (2 Chron. iii. 17) tremble as a leaf before the blast of the desert. The temple too, involved in smoke, joins with trembling columns and adoring seraphs, to bid the thoughtless world to stand in awe of God!"

The prophecy contained in this chapter is, in part, still depending, and will not be fully accomplished till the final restoration of Israel (Rom. xi.

25—27). The judgments which it threatens had probably a view both to the Chaldean and Roman conquests, and had their full accomplishment in the latter, about 800 years after they were foretold. The tree, then blasted by the lightening of heaven, has stood above 1700 years, an awful monument of the divine displeasure. Yet the trunk still remains unconsumed; *its substance is in it*, and one day, as here predicted, it will flourish again with renewed verdure, and become as the garden of God.

VII. The king of Judah and the royal family being in the utmost consternation, on receiving accounts of the invasion of the kings of Syria and Israel, the Prophet is sent to assure them, that God would make good his promises to David and his house; so that, although they might be corrected, they could not be destroyed while these remained to be accomplished. This is the subject of the 7th, 8th, and beginning of the 9th chapters. The 7th begins with an account of the occasion of the prophecy (1—3), and then follows (4—9) a prediction of the ill success of the Israelites and Syrians against Judah. The particular period in which Ephraim or Israel should be no more a nation is foretold; which prophecy was punctually fulfilled by the total depopulation of their country by Esarhad-don, who gleaned away all the remains that had been left by former conquerors. From this period the ten tribes were no longer a different people, but were confounded with the people of Judah in the captivity, and with them comprehended ever since in the general

name of Jews. But as the object of this consolation was distant, the Prophet (10—16) gives Ahaz the prospect of a nearer deliverance, by telling him, that, by the time a child that might be born of a young woman, then a virgin, should come to the age of distinguishing between good and evil; that is, in a few years, the present enemies of Judah should be destroyed, and there should be peace in the land; of which such delicate food as butter and honey was an emblem.

This prophecy, however, is introduced with so much solemnity, the circumstances of it so peculiarly marked, and the name of the child so emphatic, that however applicable the terms might be to the case immediately in view, they must be allowed to refer chiefly to the great Deliverer, who was afterwards to be born of a virgin; and who, in the sequel of this very prophecy (viii. 8), is characterised as Lord or Prince of the land of Judah.—We must always remember, that it is the manner of this Prophet to connect temporal and spiritual deliverances together, and that frequently the view of the latter, rushing powerfully on his mind, absorbs, as it were, every thought of the former.

With regard to the more immediate accomplishment of this prophecy, see 2 Kings xv. 30, and xvi. 9, where we have an account of the captivity of Israel and Syria by Tiglath-pileser, and of the death of Pekah and Retzin, all within three years after the date of this prediction.

Notwithstanding the Prophet's assurances of deliver-

ance, Ahaz could not trust in God, but applied for aid to the king of Assyria (2 Kings xvi. 7, 8). Upon which the Prophet foretels the calamities about to ensue from this powerful ally, "the hired razor," whose forces, aided by Egyptian auxiliaries, (Ush. Annal. ad A. M. 3294,) God would hift, like so many swarms of insects, for the purpose of desolating all parts of his country, and plundering or cutting off all ranks of people, from the highest to the lowest (17—20).

The remaining verses (21—25) contain a beautiful and pathetic description of a land utterly desolate and forsaken: "the vineyards and corn fields, before well cultivated, are now over-run with briers and thorns; the pasture so rank, and the cattle left upon it so few, that a young cow, and a couple of sheep, having full range, shall yield abundance of milk to the scanty family of the owner: the thinly scattered people live not on corn, wine, and oil, the produce of cultivation, but on milk and honey, the gifts of nature; and the whole land is given up to the wild beasts; so that the miserable inhabitants are forced to go out with bows and arrows, either to defend themselves against those wild beasts, or to procure sustenance by hunting."

Although this prophecy may relate more immediately to the invasion of Sennacherib, it is probable, from the strong terms of it, that it may have a further view to the calamities that were inflicted by the king of Babylon; who may be designed by his former title of king of Assyria.

VIII. The foregoing chapter, with the first four verses of this, refers only to the kingdom of Judah; the sixth and seventh verses seem to refer to that of Israel, which, for rejecting the gentle stream of Siloah (nigh Jerusalem,) would be overflowed by the great river of Assyria; alluding to the conquests of Tiglath-pileser and Shalmaneser over that kingdom. The 8th verse again refers to the kingdom of Judah, which would be in such imminent danger from the same quarter (under Sennacherib,) as a man that is drowning, when he can but just keep his head above the waters.

The two next verses (9, 10) are addressed by the Prophet to the Israelites and Syrians, confederated against Judah, and perhaps to all the enemies of God's people; assuring them that all their efforts would be fruitless, for that the promised IMMANUEL (or God with us) would be the defence of his people. He then proceeds to warn his countrymen against idolatry, divination, and the like sinful practices; exhorting them to trust in God, and seek direction from his word, professing (in a beautiful apostrophe to God ver. 17) that this was his own pious resolution. And, to enforce this counsel, and strengthen their faith, he points to his children, whose symbolic names were signs or pledges of the divine promises, the one (chap. vi. 13) implying that a remnant should return from the captivity; the other (chap. viii. 1—3) that their enemies were devoted to destruction: intimating withal, that the faithful, who should attend to his counsel, should find security; while the generality of

the nation would be involved in the utmost distress, in consequence of their rejecting it (11—22).—That this part of the prophecy respects principally the time of the Messiah's manifestation, when the generality of the Jews rejected him, and thereby incurred the most dreadful calamities, is plain from the references made to it in the following places, Rom. ix. 33, 1 Pet. ii. 8, Matth. xxi. 44, Heb. ii. 13.

IX. The first verse of this chapter ought to have been joined to the preceding, and then the next six verses conclude this section with an illustrious prophecy of the Messiah. He is represented by the figure of the sun, or light, rising on a benighted world, and diffusing joy and gladness wherever he sheds his beams (2, 3). His conquests are astonishing and miraculous, as in the day of Midian (Judges vii), and the peace which they procure is to be lasting, as denoted by the burning of all the implements of war (4, 5). The person and character of this great Deliverer (already pointed out by the name of Immanuel, born of a virgin) are then set forth in the most magnificent terms which either heaven or earth could furnish (6); the extent of his kingdom is declared to be universal, and the duration of it eternal (7).

From ver. 8th of this chap. to the end of the 4th ver. of chap. x, tho' broken by an improper division of the chapters, is one distinct prophecy; a beautiful piece, remarkable for its elegance and regularity. It relates chiefly, if not altogether, to the kingdom of Israel, and is divided into four parts, or stanzas, each threaten-

ing the particular punishment of some heinous sin;—of pride, in slighting the divine judgments (7—11);—of perseverance in vice (12—16);—of impiety, spreading like a conflagration (17—20);—and of injustice (chap. x. 1—4). To each part is added a distich menacing further vengeance, and forming, as it were, “the burden of the song.”

X. At the 5th ver. of this chapter, begins a new and distinct prophecy continued to the end of chap. xii. The subject of this chapter is the invasion of Sennacherib and the destruction of his army. That mighty monarch is represented as a rod in the hand of God to correct his people for their sins; and his ambitious purposes, contrary to his own intentions, are made subservient to the great designs of providence (5—11). Having accomplished this work, the Almighty takes account of his impious vauntings (12—14), and threatens utter destruction to the small and great of his army, represented by the thorns and the glory of the forest (15—19). This leads the Prophet to comfort his countrymen with the promise of this signal interposition of God in their favour (20—27, with chap. xxxvii. 35).—The close of the chapter gives a brief description of the march of Sennacherib towards Jerusalem, and of the alarm and terror which he spread every where as he hastened forward (28—32). The spirit and rapidity of the description is admirably suited to the subject. You see the affrighted people fleeing, and the eager invader pursuing. You hear the cries of one city echo to those of another, and groan

swiftly succeeds to groan, till at length the rod is lifted over the last citadel.—In this critical situation, however, the promise of a divine interposition is seasonably renewed (33, 34); the scene instantly changes, the uplifted arm of this mighty tyrant is at once arrested and laid low by the hand of heaven; and the mind is equally pleased with the equity of the judgment, and the beauty and majesty of the description.

XI. In the close of the preceding chapter, the Prophet had described the overthrow of the Assyrian army under the image of a mighty forest, now laid low by the ax, wielded by the hand of some superior agent. In opposition to this, he represents the Great Deliverer, who makes the subject of this chapter (see Rom. xv. 12), as a slender twig shooting up from the root of an old withered stem; which tender plant, so weak in appearance, should nevertheless become fruitful and mighty.—This subject flows naturally from that of the preceding chapter, and affords a striking instance of that method so common with the Prophets, especially with Isaiah, of taking occasion from the mention of some great and temporal deliverance, to launch out into the display of the spiritual deliverance of God's people by the Messiah.—The beautiful assemblage of images by which the peace and happiness of His kingdom are set forth in this chapter cannot be sufficiently admired.—“The wolf and the leopard, no longer fierce, lie down with the lamb and the kid; the calf and the young lion are led in the same peaceful band, and that by a little child; and the heifer and the

the bear feed together, and lodge their young, of whom they used to be so jealous, in the same place; all the serpent kind are so harmless, that the sucking child may put his hand on the basilisk's den, and play on the hole of the aspic.

The Greek and Latin Poets have painted their golden age in very beautiful colours, but the exquisite imagery of Isaiah stands unequalled and inimitable."

It is hardly necessary to observe, that these figurative expressions of the Prophet denote the power of the gospel in changing the hearts, tempers, and lives of the worst of men. Of this happy power there has been in every age a cloud of witnesses, although its most glorious era, predicted here, may not yet be arrived.

The latter part of the chapter (10—16,) in which there are many beautiful allusions to the Exodus from Egypt, seems to refer principally to the future restoration of the Jews from their several dispersions, and to that happy period, when they and the Gentiles shall stand together under the banner of Jesus, and unite their zeal in extending the limits of His kingdom.

XII. Accordingly, this hymn, connected with what goes before, seems more applicable to such a period of the Christian church, than to any period whatever under the Jewish dispensation. The Jews themselves applied it to the times of the Messiah; for it was their custom, on the last day of the feast of tabernacles, to draw water in a golden pitcher from the well of Siloam, and to pour it, mixed with wine, on the sacrifice

as it lay on the altar, singing all the while a part of this hymn (especially ver. 3) with great rejoicings, and looking forward to that abundance of blessings which they expected in the times of the Messiah, and of which this ceremony was a very significant emblem. Our Saviour likewise applies this ceremony to himself, and to the effusion of the Holy Spirit in the gospel-times (John vii. 37, 39).

XIII. XIV. These two chapters (striking off the last five verses of the latter, which belong to a quite different subject,) contain one entire prophecy, foretelling the destruction of Babylon by the Medes and Persians, and delivered near 200 years before its accomplishment. The captivity itself, which the Prophet here takes for granted as a thing certain, without mentioning it, did not fully take place till about 130 years after this prediction was delivered; and the Medes, who are expressly mentioned (ver. 7) as the principal agents in overturning this great monarchy, and releasing the Jews from their captivity, were at that time a people of no account, forming only a province of the Assyrian empire.

The prophecy divides itself into two parts; the first is remarkable for sublimity of thought and elegance of style, and the last is a triumphant ode or song of unequalled excellence.—The subject opens with the command of God to assemble the forces destined for this service (2, 3). Upon which the Prophet immediately hears the tumultuous noise of nations crowding to the standard of Jehovah: he sees them advancing from all

quarters to execute the purposes of his vengeance (4, 5). The dreadful consequences of this visitation are then described, and the terror and dismay of those who are the objects of it (6—10). And to heighten this terror, the speech is transferred unawares (at ver. 11) from the Prophet to God himself, who is introduced in person, setting forth, by a variety of the most striking images, the dreadful destruction of the inhabitants of Babylon, and the everlasting desolation of that great city (11—22). Never was a description of any object of terror worked up to such a pitch as this,—even to the falling of the stars and the shaking of the heavens!

The deliverance of Judah from captivity, the consequence of this great revolution, is then declared in a few words (chap. xiv. 1—3), which introduces, with the greatest ease and propriety, the triumphant ode or song on that subject (4—28). But the various scenes, speakers, and transitions of this ode, it will be proper to point out in their order:—“A chorus of Jews is first introduced, expressing their surprise and astonishment at the sudden downfall of Babylon, and its oppressive tyrant. The harrassed kingdoms, or their rulers, denoted by the fir-trees and cedars of Lebanon, shout with joy, and the whole earth and its productions raise their voice along with them over the fallen tyrant, and vaunt of their security, now he is no more.—The scene is then changed (9), and a new set of persons introduced:—the regions of the dead are laid open, and Hades is represented as rousing up the

shades of the departed monarchs. They rise from their thrones to meet the King of Babylon on his arrival, and insult him on his being reduced to the same abject condition with themselves. This is one of the boldest figures ever attempted in poetry, and is executed with astonishing brevity, perspicuity, and force.—You are to form to yourself an idea of an immense subterraneous vault, a vast gloomy cavern, all around the sides of which there are cells (in the manner of the Jewish sepulchres) to receive the dead bodies: here the deceased monarchs lie in a distinguished sort of state, suitable to their former rank, each on his own couch, with his arms beside him, and his chiefs around him. These illustrious shades rise at once from their couches, and advance to the entrance of the cavern to meet the king of Babylon, and to insult him on his fall.—The Jews now resume the speech (12): they address the king of Babylon as the morning star fallen from heaven, the first in splendor and dignity fallen from his high state: they introduce him as uttering the most extravagant vaunts of his power and ambitious designs in his former glory, which are strongly contrasted in the close with his present low condition.—Immediately follows a different scene, happily imagined to diversify the same subject. Certain persons are introduced who light upon the corpse of the king of Babylon, cast out, and lying naked on the bare ground; so disfigured among the common slain, that it is some time before they know him. They accost him with the severest taunts; bitterly reproach him

with his destructive ambition, which brought upon him so ignominious an end, and leave him with execrating his name, race, and posterity.—To complete the whole, God is introduced (21), declaring the fate of Babylon, the utter extirpation of the royal family, and the total desolation of the city; the deliverance of his people, and the destruction of his enemies; confirming the irreverfible decree by the awful fanktion of his oath.

The images of this ode are fo various, fo numerous, and fo fublime; expreffed with fuch force, in fuch elevated words, figures, and fentences, that it is impoffible to conceive any thing of the kind more perfect. We hear the Jews, the cedars of Lebanon, the king of Babylon, the ghofts of departed monarchs, and thofe who find the king's corfe, and even God himfelf fpeaking; and we behold each of them acting his refpective part, as it were in fome well-caft drama. The perfons are numerous, but not confufed; bold, but not extravagant; a noble, fublime, and truly divine fpirit glows in every fentence; nothing can be found deficient, nothing redundant.—In a word, for beauty of difpofition, ftrength of colouring, greatness of fentiment, brevity, perfpicuity, and force of expreffion, this ode of Ifaiah ftands among all the monuments of antiquity unrivalled *."

It only remains to be obferved, that, at the precise period predicted, the prophecy was punctually fulfilled (Daniel chap. v). This great city, *the glory of king-*

* See LOWTH and MICHAELIS.

doms; a city 60 miles in compass, inclosed with a wall, by the lowest account 200 feet high and 50 broad, so that six chariots could drive abreast on it; fortified every where with towers, and secured by 100 gates of brass: a city whose beauty, strength, and grandeur; whose temples, palaces, and hanging-gardens, were the wonder of the world—became as the ruin of Sodom and Gomorrah. Not a vestige of its buildings, even of the great tower in the temple of Belus, which occupied a square of a quarter of a mile, is now to be found. Its frail materials (consisting of bricks dried in the sun,) are dissolved into their primitive earth. All is mouldered into dust, and sunk into a morass. And, as the Prophet foretold, the place where it stood is so completely occupied with all manner of wild beasts and serpents, that travellers tell us they dare not come nearer it than half a league: and thus it must ever remain; for it is doomed *never to be inhabited*.

When we compare such predictions with their events, what awful and sublime ideas do they give of God! what loud warnings to fear his judgments!

The five last verses of this prophecy, contain severe threatenings against the Philistines. Uz-ziah had subdued them (see 2 Chron. xxvi. 6, 7); but during the distress of Ahaz, they invaded Judea, and possessed themselves of some of its cities. On the death of Ahaz, Isaiah delivers this prophecy, threatening them with the destruction that Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, and great grandson of Uz-ziah, should bring upon them (see 2 Kings xviii. 8).—Uzziah, therefore, must be meant by the *rod that smote them*, and

by the *serpent from whom should spring a flying fiery serpent*; that is Hezekiah, a much more terrible enemy than Uzziah had been.

XV. This and the following chapter, are one prophecy, probably delivered in the 1st, and accomplished in the 4th year of Hezekiah (xvi. 14), when Salmanser invaded the kingdom of Israel. He might probably march through Moab, take possession of its principal strong places, Ar and Kirhars, and occasion that general distress which the Prophet paints in such strong and lively colours.—In the next chapter,

XVI. The distress of Moab by this invasion is still more pathetically described, by a variety of circumstances connected with the desolation of the country, and particularly by the son of the prince or ruler of the land, being forced to flee for his life through the desert, that he may escape to Judea; and the young women, like young birds scared from the nest, wade helpless through the fords of Arnon, the boundary of their country, to seek protection in some foreign land. Indeed, all the circumstances that enter into the description—the languishing of the vine—the ceasing of the vintage-shouting—and the sound of the Prophet's bowels quivering like a harp—are most happily chosen. The 3d, 4th, and 5th verses are addressed to Sion, recommending mercy towards her enemies in their distress, and encouraging her to look for more signal blessings under the Messiah, and more immediately under Hezekiah, who was a type of him.

XVII. This prophecy, by its title, should relate only to Damascus; but it relates no less to the kingdom of Samaria, confederated with Damascus and Syria against Jerusalem. The first three verses describe the judgments of Damascus; the next three, those of Israel; the 7th and 8th describe the good effects of those judgments on the small remnant or gleanings that should escape them; the 9th, 10th, and 11th, represent the same judgments in other, but stronger terms, and impute them to their irreligion and neglect of God.

This prophecy was fulfilled by Tiglath-pileser's taking Damascus, and carrying the people captive to Kir (2 Kings xvi. 9), and by his carrying a great part of the Israelites also captive to Assyria.—In regard to Israel, the prophecy was still more fully accomplished by the final overthrow of the kingdom, and the captivity of the people a few years after by Shalmaneser.

The three last verses of the chapter are a distinct prophecy, a beautiful detached piece, worked up with the greatest elegance, sublimity, and propriety, and forming a noble description of the formidable invasion, and sudden overthrow of Sennacherib, exactly suitable to the event (chap. xxxvii. 35—37).—Such ruin, remarks the Prophet, is the portion of the enemies of the people of God.

XVIII. This prophecy is obscure, and the history and people to which it refers, doubtful. It was probably designed to give the Jews, and perhaps the

Egyptians (whose country is supposed to be meant; ver. 1, 2, and with whom many Jews resided,) an intimation of God's interposition in favour of Sion (3, 4), and of his counsels in regard to the destruction of their common enemy, Sennacherib, whose vast army, just as he thought his projects ripe, and ready to be crowned with success (5), should become a prey to the beasts of the field, and to the fowls of heaven (6); and that Egypt should be grateful to God for the deliverance vouchsafed her, (ver. 7, with 2 Chron. xxxii 23).

The winged cymbal was an instrument of music used by the Egyptians in their sacrifices to Isis; their country is a long vale extending to 750 miles; made level and smooth by the overflowing of the Nile, measured after these inundations, in order to ascertain the boundaries, and the seed then trodden down in the mud left by the river.—The prophecy is delivered to messengers that were probably sent by the Egyptians, either to bring tidings of Sennacherib, or to form an alliance with the Jews against him.

XIX. Soon after the destruction of Sennacherib's army, by which the Egyptians were freed from so powerful an enemy, their country became a prey to intestine broils, which ended in anarchy, and in the division of the kingdom among twelve tyrants. To this succeeded the sole dominion of Psamitichus for fifty-four years. This was followed by the conquest of Nebuchadnefar, which again gave place to that of the Persians, under Cambyses the son of Cyrus. The

yoke of the Persians was so grievous, that the conquest of them by Alexander may well be considered as a deliverance to Egypt, which he and his successors greatly favoured.—To all these events the Prophet seems to have had a view in this chapter. He likewise intimates (18, &c.), the propagation of the true religion in Egypt and Syria under Alexander and his successors, the Ptolomies; the first of whom, surnamed Soter, may be alluded to by the synonymous names in ver. 20th; altho' in their highest sense, they must undoubtedly be referred to the great Saviour. In the time of this Ptolomy, there was one million of Jews in that country, who all worshipped the God of their fathers, taught and spread the knowledge of him, and consequently paved the way for an early reception of the gospel in this and the neighbouring countries (23—25),—for its triumph over idolatry in their principal cities, and even in that city whose very name denoted its being devoted to the worship of the sun*.—The dispersion of the Jews of old was like casting the seed of true religion abroad in the earth; and their dispersion at present may be yet made equally beneficial in its consequences to the world.

The Nile abounded in fishes—its inundations, in proportion to their rise, made the land fruitful;—the Egyptians prided much in the antiquity of their government—their fame for wisdom—their fine linen, &c.—hence the propriety of the Prophet's allusions to all those circumstances.

* City of *Destruction*, or of the Sun ver. 18.

When the Assyrians first invaded Judea, the terror of this report, before they made a descent on Egypt, is supposed to be alluded to in ver. 17th. See 2 Kings xviii. 13, and Ush. Annal.

XX. Tarthan, general to Sargon (one of the names of Sennacherib) king of Assyria, besieged Ashdod, which probably belonged at that time to the king of Judah (2 Kings xviii. 48). The inhabitants expected to be relieved by the Cushites (or Ethiopians) and Egyptians. Isaiah was ordered to go uncovered, that is, without his upper garment, the rough mantle worn by the Prophets (Zech. xiii. 4), probably three days, a day for a year, according to the prophetic rule (Num. xiv. 34, Ezek. iv. 6), to shew that within three years Ashdod should be taken, after the defeat of the Cushites and Egyptians by the king of Assyria, who should carry away the inhabitants naked and barefooted, as typified by the dress of the Prophet.

This warning had a view to the nation of the Jews (ver. 6), who were generally inclined to rely on the aid of Egypt more than on that of God.

XXI. The first ten verses of this chapter contain a prediction of the taking of Babylon by the Medes and Persians.—It opens with the Prophet's seeing at a distance the dreadful storm that is gathering, and ready to burst on Babylon, which, by the flooding of the Euphrates, was to become a marshy desert (ver. 1).—The event is intimated in general terms, and God's orders issued to Elam (the old name of Persia) and to Media, to set forward on the expedition (2). Upon

this the Prophet enters at once into the midst of the action, and introduces Babylon expressing in the strongest terms her astonishment and horror on the sudden surprise of the city, at the very season devoted to pleasure and festivity (3, 4). He then describes, in his own person, the situation of things there; the security of the Babylonians; and, in the midst of their feasting, the sudden alarm of war (5). The event is then declared in a very singular but elegant manner. God orders the Prophet to set a watchman to look out, and to report what he sees (6). He sees two companies (or their leaders) marching onward, representing, by their appearance, the two nations that were to execute God's orders, and who rode on mules (or asses) and camels (See Herodot. i. 80), and then declares Babylon is fallen (7—9).

The Prophet then makes a short application of the prophecy to the Jews (10), partly in the person of God, and partly in his own: *O my threshing*—"O my people, whom I shall subject to the Babylonians, to separate the chaff from the corn, your punishment will have an end in the destruction of your oppressors."

It is remarkable that Babylon, as intimated (4, 5), was taken on the night of an annual festival, when the inhabitants were in the midst of their revellings.

The short prophecy in the 11th and 12th verses is very obscure. The Edomites as well as the Jews were subdued by the Babylonians. They inquire of the Prophet how long their subjection was to last. He intimates, that the Jews were to be delivered from their

captivity, not so the Edomites.—Some suppose that the prophecy relates to the succession of light and darkness, which the land of Idumea has experienced in gospel-times. But this revolution is not peculiar to Idumea. Mahometan darkness has covered other eastern countries that once enjoyed the light of the gospel as well as Dumah. Commentators on this passage give us no more satisfaction than the Prophet himself: *If ye will inquire, inquire ye; come again.*

The remaining verses of the chapter (13—17), contain a prophecy respecting Arabia. Sennacherib, in his first march to Judea, might perhaps over-run these several clans of Arabians, and their distress on that occasion may be the subject of this prophecy, delivered within a year of its completion.

XXII. The prophecy which begins this chapter, and ends with verse 14th, relates to Jerusalem. It foretells the invasion of that city by the Assyrians, under Sennacherib; or by the Chaldeans, under Nebuchadnezzar; or probably it may have a view to both. See 2 Kings xxv. 4, 5, and 2 Chron. xxxii. 2—5.

The prophecy concerning Shebna the treasurer, which comes next (15—25), seems to have no relation to the foregoing, only that Shebna might be a principal person among those whose luxury and profaneness the Prophet had been reprehending (11—13). Eliakim, according to the prediction, was actually treasurer in the time of Sennacherib's invasion (chap. xxxvi. 22, and 2 Kings xviii. 18).—From Eliakim the Prophet, in his usual manner of passing from things

temporal to things spiritual, makes a transition to the Messiah, of whom Eliakim was a type, and to whom the words will best apply, (comp. 21—24, with Rev. iii. 7). In the last verse, the sentence against Shebna is again confirmed.

XXIII. This prophecy denounces the destruction of Tyre by Nebuchadnefar. It was delivered at least 125 years before its accomplishment, at a time when the Babylonians were the subjects and slaves of the Assyrian empire (ver. 13), and when such an event was, in human appearance, very improbable. It opens with an address to the Tyrian traders and sailors in Tarshish, (or Tartessus in Spain,) a place which they much frequented. The flourishing state of Tyre is then enlarged upon, and contrasted with its impending ruin (1—14). After this the Prophet foretells it should again recover its splendor, when the period fixed for the duration of the Babylonian empire should expire; which accordingly it did, not only after its first destruction by Nebuchadnefar, but also after a second destruction by Alexander (15—17). The last verse is supposed to refer to its early conversion to Christianity. See Acts xxi. 4. Thus God tempers his judgments with mercy; and that mercy abused, calls for judgments still more severe. Accordingly Tyre is now a mere ruin; or, to use the words of another Prophet, *a place to spread nets upon* (Ezek. xxvi. 14).

XXIV. Having declared the fate of several other nations (from chap. xiii), the Prophet now reveals the judgments that were impending over the people of

God themselves. The picture of distress is delineated in strong colours, heightened by the enumeration of many striking and concomitant circumstances. But whether the desolation here spoken of was that occasioned by Shalmaneser, Nebuchadnefar, or the Romans, is not certain. Perhaps it may have a view to all the three, especially the last, to which some parts of the description seem more particularly applicable (17—23, with Mat. xxiv. 29). But the images, though thus general, sufficiently shew the greatness of the calamity, which would only leave a small remnant in the land, as it were the gleanings of the vintage (13). The rest, scattered over all the neighbouring countries, spread there the knowledge of God, and paved the way for the gospel (14—16). In the close of the chapter, God (by alluding to the Eastern custom of allowing persons to remain long in a dungeon before their state is inquired into) promises to revisit and restore his people in the last age, when the Kingdom of God shall be established in such perfection as wholly to eclipse the glory of the temporary and typical kingdom which then subsisted (21—23).

XXV. The short glance which the Prophet gave at the promised restoration of the people of God and the Messiah's kingdom, in the close of the preceding chapter, makes him break out into a song of praise in this, where, although he now and then celebrates the praises of God for temporal mercies, such as the destruction of the cities of his enemies, (ver. 2d, alluding to preceding prophecies,) the ruin of Moab (10—

12), and the like interpositions; yet he seems to be generally impressed with a more lively sense of future and higher blessings under the gospel dispensation. These blessings are described under the figure of a feast made for all nations (ver. 6, with Luke xiv. 16), the removing of a veil from their faces (7), the abolition of death, the exclusion of all sorrow, and the extinction of all enemies (8—12). This hymn, which the Prophet himself begins, is beautifully varied and enlivened by the change of persons, particularly by the chorus introduced at ver. 9.—The Christian church is frequently figured by a mountain (6, 7, 10), in allusion to the temple, built on mount Sion.

XXVI. This chapter, like the foregoing, is a song of praise, in which thanksgivings for temporal and spiritual mercies are beautifully mingled, though the latter still predominate. Even the sublime and evangelic doctrine of the resurrection seems here to be hinted at, and made to typify the deliverance of the people of God from a state of the lowest misery; the captivity, the general dispersion, or both. This hymn too, like the preceding, is beautifully diversified by the frequent change of speakers. It opens with a chorus of the Church, celebrating the protection vouchsafed by God to his people, and the happiness of the righteous whom he guards, contrasted with the misery of the wicked whom he punishes (1—7). To this very naturally succeeds their own pious resolution of obeying, trusting, and delighting in God (8). Here the Prophet breaks in, in his own person, eagerly catch-

ing the last words of the chorus, which were perfectly unison to the feelings of his own soul, and which he beautifully repeats, as one musical instrument reverberates the sound of another on the same key with it. He makes likewise a suitable response to what had been said on the judgments of God, and observes their different effects on the good and the bad; improving the one and hardening the other (9—11). After this, a chorus of Jews express their gratitude to God for past deliverances, make confession of their sins, and supplicate his favour, which they had been long expecting (12—18). To this God makes a gracious reply, promising deliverance that should be as life from the dead (19). And the Prophet concludes with exhorting his people to patience and resignation, till God sends the deliverance he has promised (20, 21).

XXVII. The subject of this chapter is the nature, measure, and design of God's dealings with his people:—his judgments inflicted on their enemies (ver. 1); his constant care and protection of his favourite vineyard, in the form of a dialogue (2—6); the lenity with which his judgments have been tempered (7, 8); the end and design of them, namely, to recover from idolatry (9), though in the mean time they must be corrected for their sins (9, 10); after which they should be recalled, on their repentance, from their several dispersions, in the latter days (12, 13).—The first verse seems to connect better with the foregoing chapter. The monsters it speaks of, may be emblems of the enemies of the Church in general.

XXVIII. This chapter begins with a denunciation of the approaching ruin of the Israelites by Shalmaneser, whose power is compared to a tempest or flood, and his keeness to the avidity with which one plucks and swallows the grape that is soonest ripe (1—4). It then turns to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who were to continue a kingdom after the final captivity of their brethren. It gives first a favourable prognostication of their affairs under Hezekiah (5, 6); but soon changes to reproofs and threatenings, for their intemperance (7, 8), and their profaneness. For they are introduced (9, 10) as not only scornfully rejecting, but also mocking and ridiculing the instructions of the Prophet. To this God immediately retorts in terms alluding to their own mocking, but differently applied. "Yes, my dealing with you shall be according to your own words; in a country whither you shall be carried captives, you must, like children, learn a strange language, with a stammering tongue; it shall then be command upon command for your punishment; it shall be line upon line to mark out your ruin (comp. 2 Kings xxi. 13); it shall come upon you at different times, and by different degrees, till all my threatenings against you be fulfilled" (11—13). The Prophet then addresses these scoffers (14), who considered themselves as perfectly secure from every evil (15), and assures them that there was no method under heaven but one, by which they could be saved (16, with Eph. ii. 20), that every other vain resource should fail in the day of visitation (17, 18, with

Mat. vii. 24—27). He further adds, that the judgments of God were particularly levelled against them, and that all the means to which they trusted for warding them off should be to no purpose (19, 20), as the Almighty, who, on account of his patience and long-suffering, is amiably described as unacquainted with punishing, had nevertheless determined to punish them (21, 22).—The Prophet then concludes with a beautiful parable in explanation and defence of God's dealing with his people.—“As the husbandman uses various methods in preparing his land, and adapting it to the several kinds of seed to be sown, with a due observation of times and seasons; and when he hath gathered in the harvest, employs methods as various in separating the corn from the straw and chaff by different instruments, according to the nature of the different sorts of grain;—so God, with unerring wisdom and impartial justice, instructs, admonishes, and corrects his people; chastises and punishes them in various ways, as the exigency of the case requires; now more moderately, now more severely; always tempering justice with mercy; in order to reclaim the wicked, and improve the good; and, finally, to separate the one from the other (23—29).”

XXIX. The subject of this, and the four following chapters, is the invasion of Sennacherib; the great distress of the Jews while it continued; their sudden and unexpected deliverance by God's interposition in their favour; the subsequent prosperous state of the kingdom under Hezekiah, (who was also a type of

Christ,) interspersed with severe reproofs and threatenings, for their hypocrisy, stupidity or want of trust in God, and vain reliance on Egypt; and with promises of better times to succeed soon, and also to be expected in the future age of the Messiah. These chapters are not one, but several discourses, replete with elegance and variety, although chiefly on the same subject. It may be proper, however, to point out the transitions from one part of the discourse to another, beginning with this chapter:

Ver. 1—4, Represent the distress of Ariel (or Jerusalem) on Sennacherib's invasion, with manifest allusion, however, to the still greater distress which it suffered from the Romans.

5—8, Describe the disappointment and fall of Sennacherib, in terms, like the event, the most awful and terrible.

9—16, Set forth the stupidity and hypocrisy of the Jews.

17, The rejection of the Jews, and calling of the Gentiles.

18—24, Foretell the blessings of Messiah's kingdom, and the future restoration of the Jews.

XXX. 1—7, The Jews reproved for their reliance on Egypt, which exposeth them to great expence, beautifully described in ver. 6th, by the beasts of burden groaning under their presents.

8—17, Threatened for their obstinate adherence to this alliance. The image in the last of these verses is beautifully expressive of their fate.

18—26, Contain, under images the most elegant and lofty, large promises of blessings, and a restoration to the favour of God under the Messiah's reign.

27—33, Denounce again the dreadful fall of Sennacherib's army; an event supposed to be typical of the fall of Antichrist, and other enemies of the church of God; it being very common in Scripture to accommodate the same prophecy to more than one event. The description is made up of majesty and terror, but darting here and there (29 and 32) a beam of joy amidst the storm, on the people in whose favour God was to work a miracle.

XXXI. 1—3, The Jews are reproved again for their confidence in Egypt, finely contrasted with their neglect of the power and protection of God.

4, 5, Contain, notwithstanding, a promise of deliverance and protection, expressed by two similes, the first remarkably lofty and poetical, the latter singularly beautiful and tender.—“As the mother-birds hovering over their young; so shall Jehovah God of hosts protect Jerusalem; protecting and delivering; leaping forward and rescuing her.”

6, 7, Contain an exhortation to repentance, joined with the prediction of a more reformed period.

8, 9, Conclude the chapter, like the preceding, with prophesying again the fall of Sennacherib.—It was proper to dwell much on this important event, which, in human appearance, was very unlikely, the Assyrian being at that time the greatest empire in all

the world. But what is all the world before the breath of the nostril of Jehovah!

XXXII. 1—8, A prophecy of great prosperity under Hezekiah, but in its highest sense applicable to Christ, of whom Hezekiah was a type.

9—14, A description of impending calamities; supposed to refer not so much to any distress occasioned by Sennacherib, which was of short continuance, as to the invasion of the Chaldeans, or rather of the Romans.

15, Another intimation of the rejection of the Jews, and calling of the Gentiles.

16—20, All applicable to the blessings of the gospel-times, and the future prosperity of the Church.

XXXIII. Continues the same subject in a manner peculiarly elegant.

1—4, The Prophet addresses himself to Sennacherib briefly but strongly, expressing the injustice of his ambitious designs, and the sudden disappointment of them.—The ejaculatory prayer (ver. 2) breathed out in the middle of this address, is highly expressive of the Prophet's piety, and has a very fine effect.

5, 6, A chorus of Jews is introduced, acknowledging the mercy and power of God in regard to them, and celebrating the wisdom and power of their king (Hezekiah), who had placed in Him his confidence.

7—9, Then follows a description of the distress and despair of the Jews (and, as it were, the whole face of nature languishing) on Sennacherib's marching against their city, after Hezekiah, according to treaty,

had actually paid him an immense sum of money. See 2 Kings xviii. 14—26.

10—13, Upon which the Almighty is introduced, declaring he will interpose in this critical juncture, and discomfit the enemies of his people.

14—17, Then follows, in the person of the Prophet, a description of the dreadful apprehensions of the wicked in those times of distress and danger, (which, however, may be taken in a more extensive meaning,) finely contrasted with the calm confidence and security of the righteous, and their glorious prospect of felicity in the everlasting world.

18—24, The whole concludes with a description of the security of the Jews under the protection of God, and of the wretched state of Sennacherib and his army, totally discomfited, like a wreck upon the waters (23), and become an easy prey to the weakest enemy.—It has been already observed that Sennacherib is considered as a type of another enemy of the Church, so that the prophecy, in this secondary sense, may remain yet to be fulfilled.

XXXIV. This and the next chapter form a distinct section of prophecy, beautiful and sublime in the highest degree. It consists of two parts. This chapter, or first part, contains a denunciation of the Divine vengeance against all the enemies of the people or church of God. Edom and Bozrah are mentioned, a part for the whole. Accordingly, the Edomites and neighbouring nations were subdued by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. xxv. 15—26). But this event, though it may

not be excluded, does not by any means seem to come up to the terms of this prophecy, to which all nations are called upon to attend; or to an event, the description of which is so terrible that many have understood it of the last judgment, to which, in its ultimate sense, it may indeed be referred. In its primary sense, however, it may relate to the destruction of Bozrah, Babylon, or some such great city belonging to the enemies of the people of God; and in a secondary, or more remote sense, it has undoubtedly a view to events still future; to some mighty revolution that shall take place in latter times, antecedent to that more perfect state of the kingdom of God upon earth, of which the holy scriptures give us such frequent intimations.—That the next chapter,

XXXV. Forming the second part of the prophecy, and describing the flourishing state of the church of God consequent to those judgments, is to be understood of the gospel-times, is plain from every part of it.—The 5th and 6th verses had their literal accomplishment in our Saviour (Mat. xi. 4, 5). In a secondary sense they may have a further view, and run parallel to the former part of the prophecy, and so relate to the future advent of Christ, to the conversion of the Jews, and their restoration to their own land; to the greater influence and extension of the Christian faith; events predicted in the holy scriptures as antecedent and preparatory to that period.—Much of the imagery of this chapter seems to allude to the Exodus from Egypt; but it is greatly enlivened by the life,

sentiments, and passions ascribed to inanimate objects. All nature is represented as rejoicing with the people of God in consequence of their deliverance, and administering, in an unusual manner, to their relief and comfort; in so much that when the preceding part of the prophecy is understood of the last judgment, this part is understood of the happiness consequent to it in heaven. And in this sense, which cannot be excluded, many of the words may be illustrated by expressions parallel to them in the New Testament.

XXXVI. Contains the history of Sennacherib's invasion (Comp. 2 Kings xviii.—xx.), which makes the subject of so many of Isaiah's prophecies, and is necessary to introduce the prediction in the next chapter, in answer to

XXXVII. Hezekiah's prayer, which could not be well understood without it. The whole of this passage (22—34), is incomparably beautiful and sublime; at the same time the transitions are easy, and the meaning obvious. The close of the chapter (36—38) tells how the prophecy was fulfilled.

XXXVIII. The first part of the chapter gives an account of Hezekiah's dangerous sickness, and miraculous recovery; and the latter part (from ver. 10th to the end) is a tender and beautiful song of thanksgiving, in which this pious king breathed out the sentiments of a grateful heart, when his life was, as it were, restored. This ode may be adapted to other cases, and will always afford profit and pleasure to those who are not void of feeling and void of piety.

XXXIX. The first four verses of this chapter may be compared with the same account, somewhat longer, in 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, 26, 30, 31. The other verses contain a very explicit declaration of the captivity of the royal family, and of the people, by the kings of Babylon.

XL. From this to the end of the book is one continued prophecy, or rather a series of prophecies, so linked together that they cannot be separated without injuring the sense. This part of the Prophet is by much the most sublime and elegant. The chief subject is the restoration of the Church. This is pursued with the greatest regularity, containing their deliverance from captivity; the vanity and destruction of idols; the vindication of the divine power and truth; the consolation, invitation, infidelity, impiety, and rejection of the Jews; the calling of the Gentiles; the happiness of the righteous, and the final destruction of the wicked*. As the subject, however, of this very beautiful series of prophecies is chiefly of the consolatory kind, they are very properly ushered in with a promise of the restoration of the kingdom, and the return from the captivity of Babylon, through the merciful interposition of God. At the same time, this redemption from Babylon is employed as an image to shadow out a redemption of an infinitely higher and more important nature. These two events the Prophet connects together, and hardly ever treats of the former, without throwing in some intimations of the latter. Nay, sometimes, he is so fully possessed with the glories of

* See Bp. NEWTON's Dissert. on Proph.

the remoter kingdom under the Messiah, that he seems almost to lose sight of the more immediate object of his mission.

In this chapter the Prophet opens the subject with great force and elegance ; declaring God's command to his messengers (the Prophets) to comfort his people in their captivity, and to impart to them the glad tidings, that the time of favour and deliverance was at hand (1, 2). Immediately a harbinger is introduced, giving orders, as usual in the march of Eastern monarchs, to remove every objection, and to prepare the way for their return to their own land (3—5). The same words, however, in a secondary sense, relate to the opening of the Messiah's kingdom by the preaching of the gospel (Mat. iii. 3, 4). Accordingly, this subject coming once in view, is principally attended to in the sequel. Of this the Prophet gives us sufficient notice, by introducing (6) a voice commanding another proclamation, which calls off our attention from all temporary fading things, to the spiritual and eternal things of the gospel (see 1 Pet. i. 24, 25) and to the character of the great Deliverer (6—11).—And to remove every obstacle in the way of the prophecy, in either sense, or perhaps to give a further display of the character of the Redeemer, who is probably meant throughout this lofty description as well as before it, he enlarges (12—27) on the power and wisdom of God, as the Creator and Disposer of all things; and concludes (27—31) with a most comfortable application of the whole, by shewing that all this infinite power and un-

searchable wisdom is unweariedly and everlastingly engaged in strengthening, comforting, and saving his people. It is impossible to read this description of God, the most sublime that ever was penned, without being struck with inexpressible reverence and self-abasement. The contrast between the Great JEHOVAH, and every thing reputed great in this world, how admirably imagined, how exquisitely finished! What atoms and inanities are they all before HIM, who sitteth on the circle of the immense heavens, and views the potentates of the earth in the light of grasshoppers (22), "those poor insects that wander over the barren heath for sustenance, spend the day in insignificant chirpings, and take up their contemptible lodging at night on a blade of grass!"

XLI. The Prophet having intimated the deliverance from Babylon, and the still greater redemption couched under it, resumes the subject, foretels the success and conquest of the deliverer that should release them from captivity, and the ineffectual attempts of the Nations and their idols to impede his progress (1—7). He therefore encourages the seed of Abraham not to fear, as God would subdue all their enemies under them (8—16), and furnish every thing necessary to refresh and comfort them in their passage homewards, through the desert (17—20).—What an assemblage of apt and beautiful images to express the tenderness and care of God!—The Prophet then takes occasion to celebrate the presence of God, from his knowledge of events so distant; and

justly challenges the idols of the heathens to give the like proof of their pretended divinity. But they are all vanity, and accursed are they that chuse them (21—29). JEHOVAH only could declare the time, the place, the parentage and the name of this deliverer, said in ver. 2 to come from the East, and in ver. 25 to come from the North; Cyrus's father being a Persian, and his mother a Mede; the one nation to the East, the other to the North of Judea.—It must however be observed that the Prophet, through the whole of the chapter, looks through Cyrus to Christ, whom he typified, and to whom many of the circumstances of this prophecy will more fully, if not solely, apply.

XLII. Here the Prophet drops the veil, and brings the Messiah into full view, without type or allegory. He sets forth the meekness of his character, and the extent and blessings of his kingdom, particularly among the Gentiles (1—9. comp. Mat. 12. 18). In consequence of this, he calls on the whole creation to join in one song of praise to God (10—12). After which he seems again to glance at the deliverance from the captivity (13—17), although the words may as well apply to the deliverance vouchsafed the Church; to the overthrow of her most powerful enemies; and to the prevalency of true religion over idolatry and error. The Prophet then reproves the blindness and infidelity of the Jews in rejecting the Messiah, and gives intimation of those judgments which their guilt would draw on them (18—25). From this he passes

XLIII. To the pleasing prospect of those times of reconciliation and favour that should again succeed, when God should gather them, with tender care, from their several dispersions in every quarter under heaven, and bring them safely to their own land (1—7). Struck with astonishment at so clear a display of an event so very distant, the Prophet again challenges all the blinded nations and their idols to produce an instance of such foreknowledge (8, 9); and intimates that the Jews should remain (as at this day) a singular monument to witness the truth of the prediction, till it should at length be fulfilled by the irresistible power of God (10—13). He then returns to the nearer deliverance, that from the captivity of Babylon (14, 15); with which, however, he immediately connects another deliverance, described by allusions to that from Egypt (see Exod. xiv.), but represented (18) as much more wonderful than that; a character which will not apply to the deliverance from Babylon, and must therefore be understood of the restoration from the general dispersion (16—18). On this occasion the Prophet, with peculiar elegance, represents the tender care of God in comforting and refreshing his people, on their way thro' the desert, to be so great, as to make even the wild beasts haunting those parched places so sensible of the blessing of those copious streams then provided by Him, as to join their hissing and howling notes with one consent to praise him (19—21). This leads to a beautiful contrast of the ingratitude of the Jews, and a vindication of God's dealings with regard to them

(22—28). In a figurative sense this prophecy may be understood of the Redemption by Messiah, the effects of his gospel among the Gentiles, and the infidelity and rejection of the Jews.

XLIV. This chapter, besides promises of redemption, of the effusion of the Spirit, and success of the gospel (1—5), sets forth in a very sublime manner, the supreme power and foreknowledge of the One true God, and exposes the folly and absurdity of idolatry with admirable force and elegance (6—20). And to shew that the knowledge of future events belonged only to Jehovah, whom all creation is again called to adore for the deliverance and reconciliation granted to his people (21—23), the Prophet concludes (24—28), with mentioning their future deliverer expressly by his name Cyrus, near 200 years before he was born. See Ezra i. 1, 2 &c.—This remarkable prophecy has justly engaged the admiration of Heathens as well as of Christians.—The 27th verse alludes to the expedient used by Cyrus for taking Babylon, by diverting the Euphrates from its channel:—A sublime passage, giving at once a strong idea of the divine omnipotence, and an illustrious instance of the divine foreknowledge.

XLV. The predictions of the Prophets became always the clearer in proportion as they approached the event that was predicted. Isaiah at length condescends on the very circumstances and manner of the taking of Babylon by Cyrus. He had already alluded to the drying up of the Euphrates, and now he mentions the gates of brass being opened before him, and

that the treasures he should find would be immense (1—3). Accordingly the historians of this event, (Herodotus and Xenophon,) with a most astonishing conformity to the prophecy, tell us, that Cyrus contrived the stratagem of diverting the river Euphrates into a channel cut by the kings of Babylon to receive a part of its waters in times of an inundation, and of entering the City upon the night of an annual festival, in the empty channel, which ran in through the midst of it; that after he and his army had got in to the bed of the river, they might have been taken there as in a net, if the brazen gates, which led from the streets to the river, had not on that night been providentially left open, by which means they got in; and then the gates of the palace were opened by the king's orders to enquire into the cause of the tumult.—So clearly are the most contingent circumstances foreseen by God!—The same historians mention that the treasures which Cyrus found there and in Sardes amounted to L. 126,224,000 of our money.—That Cyrus might know to whom he was indebted for this wonderful success, and on what account, the Prophet tells him (3—6), and then refutes (7) the absurd opinion of the Persians (of whom Cyrus was king) that there were two supreme beings, an evil and a good one, represented by light and darkness, which are declared to be only the operation of the One great God.—From this the Prophet, in his usual way, makes a transition (ver. 8) to the still greater work of God, displayed in the dispensation of the gospel. And then

returning to his subject, obviates cavils against the providence of God, for not preventing the captivity, instead of promising deliverance from it (9—12 comp. Rom. ix. 20). The following verses (13—25), interspersed with some strictures on the absurdity of idolatry, and some allusions to the dark lying oracles of the heathens (16, 19, 20), may partly relate to the deliverance by Cyrus, but chiefly to the salvation by Messiah, which is declared to be of universal extent and everlasting duration.—It is remarkable that the words in the 23d verse (which, with the awful sanction of an oath, promise that glorious and still future period when all the kingdoms of the earth, Jew and Gentile, shall become the kingdom of God and his Christ) are in the New Testament ascribed to Christ (Rom. xiv. 10, 11. Phil. ii. 10, 11), the Prophet intimating here, as in many other places, that Messiah was very God.

XLVI. The first two verses of this chapter represent the idols of Babylon as so far from being able to bear the burden of their votaries, that they themselves are borne by beasts of burden into captivity; with which the Prophet beautifully contrasts in the next two verses, the tender care of God in bearing his people from first to last in his arms, and delivering them from their distress. He then, with his usual force and elegance, goes on (5—7) to shew the folly of idolatry, and the utter inability of idols; from which he passes with great ease to the contemplation of the attributes and perfections of the true God (8—10); particu-

larly that prescience which foretold events so distant as the temporal deliverance by Cyrus (11), and an eternal salvation by Messiah (12, 13).—It is remarkable that Cyrus, compared in ver. 11 to an *Eagle*, (so the word translated *ravenous bird* should be rendered) is said by Xenophon (Cyrop. vii. sub init.), to have an eagle for his ensign; using, without knowing it, the identical word of the Prophet, with only a Greek termination to it. So exact is the correspondence betwixt the Prophet and the historian; betwixt the prediction and the event.

XLVII. The destruction of Babylon is denounced by a beautiful selection of circumstances, in which her prosperous is contrasted with her adverse condition. She is represented as a tender and delicate virgin, reduced to the work and abject condition of a slave, and bereaved of every consolation (1—3), and that on account of her cruelty, (particularly to God's people,) her pride, voluptuousness, sorceries, and incantations (5—11). The folly of these last practices the Prophet elegantly exposes in the latter part of the chapter (12—15).

As the deliverance of the Jews was closely connected with the fall of Babylon, a chorus of them breaks in (4), in the very middle of the Prophet's denunciations, to praise God; in a distich of a different measure and construction in the original, which adds to its fine effect, considered in the light of poetry.

XLVIII. The Jews are reprov'd in this chapter for their obdurate attachment to idols, notwithstand-

ing their experience of the divine providence over them, and of the divine prescience which revealed by the Prophets the most remarkable events that concerned them; lest they should have any pretext for ascribing the least of their success to their idols, who are challenged below (14) to give the like proof of their knowledge of futurity (1—8). Yet God, after bringing them to the furnace for their perverseness, asserts his glorious sovereignty, and repeats his gracious promises of deliverance and consolation; from the benefits of which, however, the guilty and impenitent are, in the last verse, excluded. It is hardly necessary to observe that many passages in this chapter, and indeed the general strain of these prophecies, have a plain aspect to some farther restoration of the Church in the latter times, when the fall of that mystical or spiritual Babylon (Rev. xviii. 21), of which the other was a type, shall introduce, by some great revolution, the most glorious era of the gospel.—No person of taste or sensibility can read this chapter without admiring that tender, beautiful, and passionate exclamation (18, 19) put into the mouth of our heavenly Father, who afflicts his children only *if need be*, and who in all their afflictions is afflicted: “O that thou hadst observed my commandments! then had thy prosperity been like the river (Euphrates,) and thy blessedness as the floods of the sea; and thy seed had been as the sand; and the issue of thy bowels, like that of the bowels thereof, (like the fishes of the sea in number;)

thy name should not have been cut off, nor destroyed from before me!"

XLIX. In this chapter the Messiah is introduced in person, declaring the full extent of his commission, which is not only to be Saviour to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles. The power and efficacy of his word is represented by apt images; the ill success of his ministry among the Jews is intimated, and the great success of the gospel among the Gentiles (1—12). But the Prophet, casting then his eye on the happy, though distant period of Israel's restoration, makes a beautiful apostrophe to the whole creation (13), to shout forth the praises of God on the prospect of this remarkable favour. The tender mercies of God to his people, with the prosperity of his Church in general, and the overthrow of all its enemies, make the subject of the remaining part of the chapter (14—26).—

Some of the images in this chapter are tender and pathetic in the highest degree. A whole volume could not express the love which God bears to his people, so well as the affecting image in the 15th verse. It is the same to the fainting soul, that a spring of water is to the weary traveller in the perched desert.

L. This chapter vindicates God's dealings with his people, whose alienation is owing to themselves (1); and by allusions to the temporal deliverances connected with the drying up of the Red-sea and the Euphrates, asserts his power to save (2, 3); namely, by the obedience and sufferings of Messiah (4—6), who was at length to prove victorious over all his enemies

(7—9). The last two verses exhort to faith and trust in God, in the most disconsolate circumstances; with a denunciation of vengeance on those who should trust to their own devices.

LI. The Prophet, keeping the great Deliverer still in view, exhorts the faithful among the Jews, like true children of Abraham, to trust and obey him; and briefly, but beautifully, describes the happiness that should follow (1, 3). Then turning to the Gentiles, encourages them to expect a share in the same salvation (4, 5); the everlasting duration of which is beautifully described in ver. 6th.—And as it is everlasting, so is it sure to the righteous, notwithstanding all the machinations of their enemies (7, 8).—The faithful then, with exultation and joy, lift their voices, reminding God of his wondrous works of old, which encourage them to look now for the like glorious accomplishment of these promises (9—11).—*Awake, awake, O arm of the Lord!* &c. A very sublime example of personification.—In answer to this, God is introduced comforting them under their trials, and telling them that the deliverer (*he that hasteneth to set the captive free*; so should the beginning of verse 14th be rendered) was already on his way to save and to establish them (12—16). On this, the Prophet turns to Jerusalem to comfort and congratulate her on so joyful a prospect. She is represented, by a bold image, as a person lying in the streets, under the intoxicating effects of the cup of the Divine wrath, destitute of every assistance, and trodden under the

feet of her enemies, till an avenging God takes pity on her (17—23).—Several circumstances, particularly the close of verse 22d, seem to indicate that these promises relate, at least in part, to some great deliverance still future.

LII. In allusion, perhaps, to the image in the close of the preceding chapter, Jerusalem is represented as fallen asleep in the dust, and in that helpless state bound by her enemies. The Prophet, with all the ardour natural to one who had such joyful news to communicate, bids her awake, arise, and put on her best attire; and then he delivers the message he had in charge (1—6). Awaking from her stupefaction, Jerusalem sees the messenger of such joyful tidings on the eminence from which he spied the coming deliverance. She expresses, in beautiful terms, her joy at the news, repeating with peculiar elegance the words of the cryer (7). The tidings immediately spread to others on the watch, who all join in the glad acclamation (8), and in the ardour of their joy, call to the very ruins of Jerusalem to sing along with them (9, 10). The Prophet then, to complete the deliverance, bids them march, as it were, in triumph out of Babylon (11, 12).—We must always remember that the words of our Prophet extend generally beyond the deliverance from Babylon, which is but the type of a greater redemption. That this chapter relates in the highest sense to the Messiah, see Rom. x. 15.

The last three verses (13—15) are on the same subject with the next chapter, the person, offices, humi-

liation, and exaltation of Christ, and the happy consequences. Here the Messiah is introduced as appearing at first in the lowest state of humiliation, and the Prophet obviates the offence that this appearance would give, by declaring the important and necessary cause of it, and foretelling the glory that would ensue.

Babylon, which hitherto was generally kept in sight, is now dropped, and is hardly brought in view any more; the Prophet being altogether taken up with the higher part of his subject, which he treats without wearing any longer even that transparent veil with which he was in use of covering it.

LIII. This chapter foretels the sufferings of the Messiah, the end of his death, and the advantages resulting to mankind from that illustrious event. It begins with a complaint of the infidelity of the Jews (1), the offence they took at his mean and humble appearance (2), and the contempt with which they treated him (3). He then shews the Messiah was to suffer for sins not his own, but that our iniquities were laid on him, and the punishment of them exacted of him, which was the meritorious cause of our obtaining pardon and salvation (4—6). He shews the meekness and placid submission with which he suffered a violent and unjust death, with the circumstances of his dying with the wicked, and being buried with the great (7—9, with Mat. xxvii. 38, 57, 60); and that in consequence of his atonement, death, and intercession, he should procure pardon and salvation to multitudes, ensure prosperity to his Church, and triumph over all

his foes (10—12).—This chapter contains a beautiful summary of the most peculiar and distinguishing doctrines of Christianity.

LIV. Some suppose this chapter addressed to the Gentiles, some to the Jewish church, and some to the Christian, in its first stage. On comparing the different parts of it, the most probable opinion is, that it may, at least chiefly, refer to the future conversion of the Jews, and to the increase and prosperity of that nation, when reconciled to God after their long rejection; when their glory and security will far surpass what they were formerly in their most favoured state. This happy period of the Church, in which both Jew and Gentile will be joined, is described (11, 12) in almost the same terms which St John uses in speaking of the glory of the triumphant Church in heaven, Rev. xxi. 18, &c.—What glorious fruits of the travail of Messiah's soul!

LV. This comfortable chapter first displays the fullness, freeness, excellence, and everlasting nature of the blessings of the gospel, and foretels again the enlargement of Messiah's kingdom (1—5). This view leads the Prophet to exhort all to seize the precious opportunity of sharing in such blessings, which were not however to be expected without repentance and reformation (6, 7). And as the things now and formerly predicted, were so great as almost to exceed belief, the Prophet points to the omnipotence of God, who would infallibly accomplish his word, and bring about those glorious deliverances which he had promised; the

happy effects of which are again set forth by images beautiful and poetical in the first degree (8—13).—A just and lively picture of the happy change produced on the world by the gospel!

LVI. Whoever would partake of the blessings of the gospel, is required to be holy in all manner of life and conversation. And he that will be so, is declared to be accepted according to this gracious dispensation, the blessings of which are large as the human race, without any respect to persons or to nations (1—8, with Acts x. 34, 35.)

At the 9th verse begins a different subject, or new section of prophecy. It opens with calling on the enemies of the Jews (the Chaldeans, or perhaps the Romans,) as beasts of prey against them, for the sins of their rulers, teachers, and other profane people among them, whose guilt drew down judgments on the nation.

LVII. After mentioning the removal of righteous persons (alluding perhaps to the death of Hezekiah or Josiah) as an awful symptom of the approach of judgments, such as were threatened above (1, 2), the Prophet goes on to charge the nation in general with guilt; particularly with idolatry, and with courting the unprofitable alliance of idolatrous kings (3—12, comp. ver 9, with 2 Kings xvi. 10, &c. and xxiii. 35—37). In opposition to such poor confidence, the Prophet recommends trust in God, with whom the penitent and humble should find acceptance, and from whom they should obtain, not only a temporal deliver-

ance, but also a share in those extensive blessings above promised to all nations (13—19); from which the wicked and impenitent are excluded; and their portion declared to be of the very opposite kind (20, 21).—One element raging against another, and tossing up all its filth—what a strong picture of the violence of contending passions, stirring up the corruptions of a wicked and a wretched soul!

LVIII. This elegant chapter contains a severe reproof of the Jews on account of their vices, particularly their hypocrisy in practising and relying on outward ceremonies, such as fasting and bodily humiliation, without true repentance (1—5). It then lays down a clear and comprehensive summary of the duties they owed to their fellow-creatures, and of the regard which they owed to the ordinances of God, especially his sabbath. Large promises of happiness and prosperity are likewise annexed to the performance of these duties, in a variety of the most beautiful and striking images. Thus, every mean is kindly used to engage us to our duty. Now we are allured by promises; anon we are terrified by threatenings.

LIX. This chapter contains a more general reproof of the wickedness of the same people; of bloodshed, violence, falsehood, injustice (1—8). After this they are introduced confessing their sins, and deploring the unhappy consequences of them (9—15). On this act of humiliation, God, ever ready to pardon the penitent, promises that he will rescue them: that the Redeemer will come, mighty to save; that he will

deliver his people, subdue his enemies, convert both Jews and Gentiles, and establish a new and everlasting covenant (16—21). This prophecy, remarkable for the force, elegance, and variety of its images, remains as yet, in a great measure, unfulfilled. But, as a pledge of its accomplishment, the Jews remain yet a distinct people, though dispersed over all the world.

LX. The glorious prospect displayed in this chapter seems to have elevated the Prophet even above his usual majesty. The subject is the great increase and flourishing state of the church of God by the accession of the Gentile world; which is set forth in such ample and exalted terms as plainly shew that the full completion of it is reserved for future times, when the fulness of the nations shall come in, when the Jews shall be converted, and both together become the kingdom of God and of his Christ. This is the general scope of the prophecy; but the various, highly poetical, and exalted images by which it is described, were never intended to be separately or minutely, much less to be literally, explained.

LXI. The same subject is continued; and to give it the greater solemnity, the Messiah is introduced describing his character and office, and confirming the large promises made before (1—9). In consequence of this, the Jewish Church is introduced (10) praising God for the honour done her, by her restoration to favour, and by the accession of the Gentiles) which is beautifully described by allusions to the rich Pontifical dress of the High-priest. A happy simi-

litude to express the ornaments of a restored nation and a renewed mind!

LXII. The Prophet opens this chapter with ardent prayers that the happy period of reconciliation just now promised, and here again foretold, may be hastened (1—5). He then calls upon all the faithful, particularly the Priests and Levites to join him, urging the promises, and even the oath of Jehovah as the foundation of their request (6—9). And relying on this oath, he goes on to speak of the general restoration promised, as already performing; calls to the people to march forth, and to the various nations among whom they are dispersed to prepare the way for them, as God had caused the order for their return to be universally proclaimed (10—12).

LXIII. In the first six verses of this chapter, the Prophet (or rather the Church he represents) sees the great Deliverer, long promised and expected, making his appearance, after having crushed his enemies, like grapes in the wine-press. The comparison suggests a tremendous idea of the wrath of Omnipotence, which its unhappy objects can no more resist than the grapes can resist the treader. Indeed, there is so much pathos, energy, and sublimity in this remarkable passage, as hardly any thing can be conceived to exceed. The period to which it refers is probably the same with that predicted in the 19th chapter of the Revelations, some parts of which (13, &c.) are expressed in the same terms with this, and are generally understood of the fall of Antichrist and his followers.

of which the destruction of Babylon, Edom or Bozrah, may be considered as an emblem.

The remaining part of this chapter, with the whole of the following, contain a penitential confession and supplication of the Jews, as uttered in their present dispersion, apparently deserted and rejected by the God of their fathers. They begin with acknowledging (in the person of the Prophet) the great mercies of God to their nation, and the ungrateful returns which they made to them, by which they rendered God their enemy (7—10). Induced, however, by the remembrance of his former mercies, they humbly pray for the renewal of them (11—14); they beseech him to remember his former kindness; they plead their relation to him; confess their wickedness and obstinacy; intreat his forgiveness, and deplore their miserable situation (15—19). The subject is further pursued in the next

LXIV. Chapter, which is highly pathetic and tender. — The whole may be considered as a formulary of prayer and humiliation, intended for the Jews, in order to their conversion.

LXV. This chapter contains a vindication of God's dealings with the Jews, having reference, perhaps, to their prayer and complaint in the preceding chapter. It sets forth, that though for their sins he had rejected them, and called the Gentiles, who sought him not (Rom. ix. 24—26), yet would he preserve a remnant, to whom he would at length make good his promises (1—10). Severe punishments are threatened against the wicked, (alluding perhaps to the destruction by

the Romans,) and great rewards promised to the obedient (11—15), in a future state of the Church, which is described in the most splendid and magnificent terms that can be imagined (17—25).

LXVI. This chapter treats of the same subject with the foregoing. God tells the Jews, who valued themselves much on their temple and pompous worship, that the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands, and that no outward rites of worship can please Him, who looketh at the heart, while the worshippers are idolatrous and impure (1—3).—This leads to a threatening of vengeance for their guilt; alluding probably to their rejecting of Christ, their persecution of his followers, and the consequent destruction by the Romans (4—6). The increase of the Church is to be sudden and astonishing; which may be understood of the great success of the gospel when first preached, both in respect of Jews and Gentiles; and especially of the future conversion of the Jews, and fulness of the Gentiles, who shall gather from all quarters to Messiah's standard. Then both Jew and Gentile, united in the new œconomy, shall see every enemy of the true Church destroyed, and behold the final perdition of unbelieving and ungodly men (7—24). Here, after tracing the principal events of Time, this great Prophet seems at length to have terminated his views in Eternity, where all revolutions cease; where the blessedness of the righteous shall be unchangeable as the New Heavens, and the misery of the wicked as the fire that shall not be quenched. See Rev. xxi. 1, Mark ix. 44.

J E R E M I A H.

JEREMIAH was a Priest of the tribe of Benjamin, and called to the prophetic office when very young. He entered upon it about 70 years after the death of Isaiah, and exercised it for about 42 years, with great faithfulness and zeal, and in very unfavourable circumstances. At the time that he began to prophesy, the sins of the Jews were come to their full measure, after a reformation had been in vain attempted by Josiah. To punish a nation unworthy of such a sovereign, God called him early away. His two sons, who successively mounted the throne after him, were as remarkable for vice as the father was for virtue. The first, (Shallum or Jehoahaz,) after a reign of three months was carried captive to Egypt, where he died. His brother Jehoiakim, on condition of paying a large sum of money to the king of Egypt, was allowed to succeed him. But the Babylonians, about three years thereafter, having made a descent on Judea and taken Jerusalem, he was obliged to swear fealty to the king of Babylon, who carried with him a number of captives, among whom were many of the children of the first families, together with a great part of the sacred vessels of the Temple.—Jehoiakim, however, was left in possession of the throne, on condition of his paying a yearly tribute. But refusing to fulfil his promise after the first three years, the king of Babylon sent some forces, joined by the Syrians and Ammonites, to commit depredations on

his country. This they did for several years, always carrying off spoils and captives. Jehoiakim, in attempting to repel one of their invasions, was slain without the gates of the city; and his body, after having been treated with much ignominy, was cast into the fields, without the honours of a burial.—His son Jeconiah though very young, succeeded him, and in rebellion and vice followed his example. After a reign of only three months, Nebuchadnefar, who had come to Judea in person, carried him, and almost all the people of any note in the country, captive to Babylon. The golden vessels that had remained in the Temple were likewise carried off at this time.—Zedekiah, uncle to Jeconiah, was permitted to succeed him, on swearing allegiance and becoming tributary to the king of Babylon. But relying on the assistance of Egypt, he revolted soon after, and drew on himself and on his country the full vengeance of the Babylonian monarch, as related in the 52d chapter. The subsequent transactions of the murder of Gedaliah, (who was left Governor in the country,) and the retreat of the remaining Jews into Egypt, whither they were accompanied by Jeremiah, who is said to have been there put to death, may be seen from chapter 40th to 44th inclusively.

Soon after the taking of Jerusalem and the carrying of Judah into captivity, Nebuchadnefar brought on the Tyrians, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Philistines, and other neighbouring nations, that destruction which the Prophets of God foretold and

threatened. He likewise ravaged Egypt, and either killed or enslaved all the Jews who had fled thither for refuge.

Thus matters stood, till at the precise period foretold by Isaiah and the other Prophets, the Babylonian monarchy was overturned, and the Jews restored to their liberty and their country by Cyrus.

This short view of the history of Jeremiah's times may in some measure help us to understand his prophecies; of which the general subject is—the idolatry and other sins of the Jews,—the judgments that were impending on that account, together with their future restoration and deliverance; interspersed with several intimations of the Messiah. From this account, however, we must except the 45th chapter, which relates to his disciple Baruch, and the six following, which respect the fate of other nations.

The style of Jeremiah is beautiful and tender to a high degree; especially when he has occasion to excite the softer passions of grief and pity; which is not seldom the case in the first parts of the prophecy. It is likewise, on many occasions, very elegant and sublime, especially towards the end (xlii.—li.), where this Prophet approaches even the majesty of Isaiah. The historical narratives, which are occasionally introduced, are written in a plain prosaic style; the fittest style for narratives. The chapters are not now arranged according to the order of time in which they were delivered, which is supposed to be the following:

In the reign of Josiah, chapters i.—iv.

In that of Jehoiakim, chapters xiii.—xx. ver. 11—14 of xxi. xxii. xxiii. xxv. xxvi. xxxv. xxxvi. and xlv.—xlix. ver. 1—33.

In that of Zedekiah, chapters xxi. ver. 1—10, xxiv. xxvii.—xxxiv. xxxvii. xxxix. xlix. ver. 34—39, and l. li.

When Gedaliah was Governor, chapters xl.—xlv.

Chapter lii. is supposed to have been added by Ezra after the captivity, to shew the correspondence between the prophecy and the event.

CHAP. I. In this chapter, we have first a general title to the whole book (1—3); then we have Jeremiah's call and commission to the prophetic office, for which God had designed him before he was born (4—10). The vision of the rod of almond-tree, signified the nearness, and the seething pot the severity, of the Divine judgments. The face of the pot being *from* the north, denoted that these judgments were to be inflicted by the Chaldeans, who lay to the north of Judea, and were appointed by God to correct it for the sins of its inhabitants (11—16). The chapter concludes with promises of the Divine aid and protection to Jeremiah, in the discharge of his difficult and dangerous office (17—19).

II. In the beginning of this chapter God expresses his continued regard for his people, long since chosen (1—3). He then expostulates with them on their ungrateful and worse than heathen return to his regard (4—11), at which even the inanimate creation must be astonished (12, 13). After this, their guilt

is declared to be the cause of these calamities which their enemies were permitted to inflict on them (14—17). They are upbraided for their dangerous alliances with idolatrous countries (18—19), and for their strong propensity to idolatry, notwithstanding all the care and kindness of God (20—30). The chapter concludes with remonstrating against their folly and ingratitude in revolting so deeply from God, and with warning them of the fatal consequences (31—37).

Many of the images and expressions in this chapter are bold and beautiful. The very heavens, the inanimate creation, represented (12) as shocked, and, as it were, annihilated with horror at the guilt and ingratitude of the Jews, is remarkably sublime; and so is the personification of SIN, to punish those who delight in it (19). The emblem of a vine (21) to represent the Church is frequent but beautiful; and the figure of the ornaments and attire of a bride (32), to denote the honour of serving God, is apt and elegant. There is, however, one set of metaphors not unfrequent in this and some of the other Prophets, which to some may appear harsh. But these might not have the same sound in the original language, which probably had other terms for ordinary use; it being very common in all languages to have different words (dignified and mean, or classical and vulgar,) to express the same ideas: and as God's covenant with his people is frequently expressed by the metaphor of marriage, so any breach of that covenant, particularly idolatry, is very fitly compared to unchastity, or infidelity to the mar-

riage-bed; one abominable sin of a carnal nature, to be the emblem of another that is spiritual.

III. The first five verses of this chapter allude to the subject of the last, and contain earnest exhortations to repentance, with gracious promises of pardon, notwithstanding every aggravation of guilt (1—5).—A beautiful example of the placability and tenderness of the Divine nature.

The section of prophecy beginning at the sixth verse is probably continued to the end of the sixth chapter. It begins with a complaint against Judah, for having exceeded in guilt her sister Israel already cast off for her idolatry (6—11). She is cast off, but not for ever. For to this same Israel, whose place of captivity (Assyria) lay to the north of Judea, pardon is promised on her repentance, together with a restoration to the church of God, along with the Gentiles, in the latter days. It is also hinted (18), that Judah should share the same fate and the same fortune; although the general scope of the passage relates to Israel (12—20). In consequence of the above declarations of mercy, the Prophet hears the children of Israel expressing their sorrow and repentance (21); God again renews his gracious promises (22); and they again confess their sins (22—25). In this confession, their not deigning to name the idol Baal, the source of their calamities, but calling him in the abstract *shame*, or a *thing of shame*, is a nice touch of the pencil, extremely beautiful and natural.

IV. The first two verses of this chapter are a repetition of those exhortations and promises that were addressed to Israel in the preceding chapter, of which these verses ought to make a part. The Prophet then addresses the people of Judah and Jerusalem; exhorting them to repentance and reformation, in order to prevent, if possible, the dreadful visitation that approached them (3, 4). He then sounds the alarm of war (5, 6). Nebuchadnefar, like a fierce lion, is on his march, and the disastrous event is already declared (7—9). And as the lying prophets had flattered the people with the hopes of peace and safety, they are now introduced, (when their prediction is falsified by the event,) excusing themselves, and, with matchless effrontery, laying the blame of the deception upon God (10, “And *they* said, &c.” So the text is corrected by Kennicot). The Prophet immediately resumes his subject, and, in the person of God, denounces again those judgments which were to be inflicted by Nebuchadnefar (11—18). It deserves our notice, that in the midst of this denunciation (14), he breaks out into a passionate wish that they might still repent and avert his judgments, which are declared in the close (18) to be the necessary consequence of their impiety.—What beams of mercy break here through the darkest clouds of judgment!

The Prophet having heard the calamities with which his country was about to be visited, laments, in the strongest terms, her approaching ruin (19—21), which God imputes again to the incorrigible wicked-

ness of her inhabitants (22). In the remaining verses, the Prophet gives a most awful and pathetic description of the effect of this visitation (23—31); the 23d, 26th, and 31st verses in his own person, and the intermediate ones (27—30) in the person of God.

Through the whole of this chapter the transitions are frequent and abrupt, but not dark or confused; the style is lively and warm, and the images bold and poetical; especially those that relate to the devastation of the country. This sad catastrophe is described by such a beautiful assemblage of the most striking and interesting circumstances as form a picture of a land "swept by the besom of Destruction."—The earth seems ready to return to its original Chaos; every ray of light is withdrawn, and succeeded by a frightful gloom; the mountains tremble, and the hills shake under the dreadful apprehension of the wrath of JEHOVAH; all is one awful solitude, where not a vestige of the human race is to be seen. Even the fowls of heaven, finding no longer whereon to subsist, are forced to migrate; the most fruitful places are become a dark and dreary desert, and every city is become a ruinous heap.—To complete the whole, the dolorous shrieks of Jerusalem, as of a woman in peculiar agony, break through the frightful gloom, and the appalled Prophet pauses—leaving the reader to reflect on the dreadful effects of sin!

V. The Prophet having described the judgments impending his countrymen, enlarges (in this and the following chapter) on the corruptions which pre-

vailed among them, and which are affirmed to be the cause of their ruin, which is occasionally intimated. —More particularly, God is introduced complaining of the general depravity of the people, insomuch that if one righteous person could save Jerusalem, in Jerusalem one righteous person was not to be found (1); any profession of religion among them was all false and hypocritical (2). The Prophet then carries on the complaint in his own person, adding, that though they were corrected, they were not amended, but persisted in their guilt (3); and that this was not the case with the low and ignorant only (4), but more egregiously so with those of the higher order, from whose knowledge and opportunities better things might be expected (5). God, therefore, threatens them with the most cruel enemies (6), and appeals to themselves if they should be permitted to practise such sins unpunished (7—9). He then issues his orders to their enemies to raze the walls of Jerusalem (10), that devoted city, whose inhabitants added to all their other sins the highest contempt of God's word and Prophets (11—13). Wherefore his word, in the mouth of his Prophet, shall be as fire to consume them (14); the Chaldean forces shall cruelly afflict them (15—17), and further judgments still await them (18), as the consequence of their apostasy and idolatry (19). For the stupidity of this last practice especially, they are sharply upbraided, considering their knowledge and experience of the power and mercy of the great God, till that mercy was intercepted by their iniquities,

which were numerous as a flock of birds entrapped in a snare, and loudly called for punishment on all ranks and denominations among them (20—31.)

VI. The Prophet, seeing the Chaldeans on their march, bids his people set up the usual signals of distress, and spread the general alarm to betake themselves to flight (1).—The rapidity of the movements and the quickness of the transitions in this verse are highly expressive of the great emotion of the Prophet's mind, and peculiarly suited to the alarming occasion. Then, by a beautiful allusion to the custom of shepherds moving their flocks to the richest pastures, Jerusalem is singled out as a place devoted to be eaten up, or trodden down by the armies of the Chaldeans, who are called up against her, and whose ardour and impatience is so great, that the soldiers, when they arrive in the evening, regret they have no more day, and desire to begin the attack, without waiting for the light of the morning (2—5). God is then represented as animating and directing the besiegers against this guilty city, which sinned as incessantly as a fountain flows (6, 7), altho' warned of the fatal consequence (8). He intimates also (by the gleaning of the grapes) that one invasion should carry away the remains of another, till their disobedience, hypocrisy, and other sins, should end in their total overthrow (9—15). And to shew that God is *clear when he judgeth*, he mentions his having in vain admonished and warned them, and calls upon the whole world to witness the equity of his proceedings (16—18).

in punishing this perverse and hypocritical people (19—20), by the the ministry of the cruel Chaldeans (21—23). Upon this a chorus of Jews is introduced, expressing their fears and alarm (24, 25), to which the Prophet echoes a response full of sympathy and tenderness (26). The concluding verses, by metaphors taken from the process of refining gold and silver, represent all the methods hitherto used to amend them as ineffectual, and consequently the necessity of further discipline (27—30, with chap. ix. 7).

VII. Here begins another section of prophecy ending with chap. x. It opens with exhorting to amendment of life, without which their confidence in the Temple is declared vain (1—11). God bids them take warning from the fate of their brethren the Israelites, who had lately been carried away on account of their sins, without any regard to that sacred place (Shiloh), where the ark of God once resided. And as God had decreed the like punishment for them, the Prophet is forbidden to intercede for them (12—16); especially as they persisted in provoking God by their idolatrous practices (17—20). He further declares their sacrifices, without obedience, to be of no avail; justifies the severity of his dealings in regard to them; and threatens again to take vengeance on their sins (21—34.)

VIII. The judgments just now threatened are here declared to extend to the very dead, whose tombs should be ransacked, in hopes of finding treasures, which it was sometimes customary to bury with great people

{1—3. See Joseph. Antiq. l. 7. c. ult.)—From this the Prophet returns to reprove them for their constant perseverance in sinning (4—6), and for their thoughtless stupidity, which even the instinct of the brute creation, by a beautiful contrast, is made to upbraid (7—9). This leads to further threatenings, expressed in a variety of striking terms (10—13). Upon which a chorus of Jews is introduced, expressing their terror and alarm on the news of the invasion (14, 15), which is greatly heightened in the next verse by the Prophet's hearing the snorting of Nebuchadnefar's horses even from Dan, and then seeing the devastation made by his army (16), whose cruelties God himself declares no intreaties will soften (17). On this declaration the Prophet laments most bitterly the fate of the daughter of his people, changing the scene unawares to the place of her captivity, where she is introduced answering in mournful responses to the Prophet's dirge (18—22).—The variety of images and figures used by the Prophets to diversify the same subject is equally pleasing and astonishing. The dress is generally new, always elegant.

IX. Continues the same subject. The Prophet by turns bewails, reproves, and threatens. In his threatenings he seems to observe a beautiful climax or gradation. First, the people are cast into the furnace, or severely corrected (7); then Jerusalem, their capital, destroyed; all the other cities of the land suffer next the same fate, and deny them any refuge (11), only the wretched inhabitants are reserved for further

calamities, and their miserable life preserved by gall and wormwood (15). To bear such existence might be still tolerable to a Jew, were he only permitted to stay in his own country, weep over the ashes of his dear Jerusalem, and find a grave in the holy land. But even this melancholy comfort is denied. They must be dragged, the slaves of cruel masters, to a foreign and a heathen country. There the sword pursues them; there they suffer, and there they die (16). But this is not all. By a beautiful allusion to an ancient custom, the subject is still pursued: a band of mourning women is called to lament over them (17, 18); and even the funeral dirge on the occasion is given us, in terms full of beauty, elegance, and pathos (19—21). At length, however, to relieve the mind from this mournful scene, a gleam of hope springs up amidst the gloom. God is introduced, declaring he has still loving kindness in reserve for them that know him; and threatening to take vengeance on the enemies of his people (23—26).

X. The Jews being doomed to captivity, are here warned against the superstition and idolatry of that country to which they were going. Chaldea was famous for astrology, and therefore the Prophet begins with warning them against it (1, 2). He then exposes the absurdity of idolatry, in a short but elegant satire; in the midst of which he turns, in a beautiful apostrophe (6, 7), to the One great God, whose adorable attributes repeatedly strike his view as he goes along, and lead him to contrast his

infinite perfections with those despicable inanities which blinded nations fear (3—16). It is remarkable that ver. 11th was written not in Hebrew, but in Chaldaic; both to intimate to them the country whither they were to be carried away, and to arm them with a ready answer to every enticement to idolatry.—A remarkable instance of the compassionate care of God for his people, even when most angry with them!

The Prophet in verses 17th and 18th, returns to his denunciations; after which Jerusalem again appears, lamenting her fate, and supplicating the Divine compassion in her favour (19—25).

XI. The Prophet proclaims the tenor of God's covenant with the Jews of old (1—5), and then reproves them for their hereditary disobedience (6—10). In consequence of this, God is introduced, declaring he will shew them no pity (11—13), forbidding the Prophet to intercede (14), rejecting their sacrifices (15), and, in a word, condemning this fair but unfruitful tree to the fire (16, 17).—In what remains of the chapter, the Prophet predicts evil to his neighbours of Anathoth, who had conspired against him (18—23). “Let us, said they, destroy this tree,” &c. alluding to what the Prophet had said above in ver. 16.

XII. This chapter is connected with the foregoing. The Prophet expostulates with God concerning the ways of Providence, in permitting the wicked to prosper (1—4). It is intimated to him that he must endure still greater trials (5) from his false and deceit-

ful brethren (6); but that still heavier judgments awaited the nation for their crimes (7—13); that God, however, should at length have compassion on them, restore them to their land, and turn his judgments against those that oppressed them, if not prevented by their becoming converts to the true religion (14—17).

Some suppose that the latter part of the prophecy might relate to the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, and other nations in the neighbourhood of Judea; and observe, in confirmation of it, that a great part of the Moabites were cut off some time after the return from the captivity, under Alexander king of the Jews; a great part of the Ammonites by Judas Maccabeus; and all the Edomites, except such as became proselytes to Judaism, by John Hyrcanus. Others refer the prophecy to a period still future, understanding it of the general restoration of the Jews, and of the judgments that shall be inflicted on the enemies of the Church, who shall not become converts to Christianity. —Perhaps it may be understood of both, and that it should not be limited to any one event.

XIII. This chapter contains an entire prophecy. The symbol of the linen girdle, left to rot for a course of time, was a type of the manner in which the glory of the Jews should be marred during the course of their long captivity (1—11). The scene of hiding the girdle (supposed to have been transacted in vision) being laid near the Euphrates, intimated that the scene of the nation's distress, should be Chaldea, which that river waters. The next three verses, by another em-

blem, frequently used to represent the judgments of God, are designed to shew that the calamities threatened should be extended to every rank and denomination (12—14). This leads the Prophet to a most affectionate exhortation to repentance (15—17). But God, knowing this happy consequence was not to ensue, sends him with an awful message to the royal family particularly, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem in general, declaring their fate in plain terms (18—27). The passionate wish for the reformation of Jerusalem, with which the chapter concludes, finely displays the compassion and placability of God.

XIV. This chapter begins with foretelling a drought that should greatly distress the land of Judea; the effects of which are described in a most pathetic manner (1—6). The Prophet then, in the people's name, makes confession of sin, and supplication for pardon (7—9). But God declares his purpose to punish (10—12). False prophets are then complained of, and threatened with destruction; as are also the people who attend to them (13—16). The Prophet, therefore, bewails their misery (17, 18); and though he had been just now forbidden to intercede for them, yet, like a tender pastor, who could not cease to be concerned for their welfare, he falls on the happy expedient of introducing themselves as supplicating, in their own name, that mercy which he was not allowed to ask in his (19—22).—To this God replies,

XV. That not even Moses and Samuel (whose prayers had been so prevalent) could divert him from his purpose of punishing so wicked a people (1). Accordingly, their fate is again declared in a variety of images (2—9) so full of terror, that the Prophet complains of his own hard fate in being obliged to deliver such unwelcome messages (10); for which he too is reproved (11—14). Immediately he appeals to God for his sincerity, and supplicates pardon (15—18); and God tempers his reproof with promising again to protect him in the faithful discharge of his duty (19—21).

XVI. On account of the evils which threatened his country, the Prophet is forbidden to encumber himself with a wife or family, or to bear any share in the little joys or sorrows of his neighbours, which were to be forgotten and absorbed in those public calamities (1—9), which their sins should draw on them (10—13). A future restoration, however, is intimated (14, 15), after those calamities should be endured (16—18); and the conversion of the Gentiles is foretold (19—21).

XVII. This chapter begins with setting forth the fatal consequences of the strong bias which the people of Judah had to idolatry (1—4). The happiness of the man that trusts in God is then beautifully contrasted with the opposite character (5—8), whose latter end is described (9—11). The comparison (11) of a bird's hatching the eggs of another of a different species which will soon forsake her, is highly expressive of

the vanity of riches, which often disappoint the owner. The Prophet continues the same subject in his own person, appeals to God for his sincerity, and prays that the evil intended him by his enemies may revert on their own heads (12—18).

The remaining part of the chapter is a distinct prophecy, relating to the due observance of the sabbath, enforced both by promises and threatenings (19—27).

XVIII. In this chapter the absolute sovereignty of God over his creatures, is represented by the potter's power over his clay (1—10, comp. Rom. ix. 20, &c.) The Jews are then exhorted to repentance (1); but on their refusal, (which is represented to be as unnatural, as if a man should prefer the snowy Lebanon or barren rock, to a fruitful plain, or other waters to the cool stream of the fountain,) their destruction is predicted (12—17).—In consequence of those plain reproofs and warnings of the Prophet, a conspiracy is formed against him. This leads him to appeal to God for his innocence, and to cry to him for justice, in terms which may be considered as prophetic of the fate of his enemies (18—23).—The two following chapters seem to be connected with this.

XIX. By the significant type of breaking the potter's vessel, Jeremiah is directed to predict the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem. The Prophets taught frequently by symbolic actions as well as by words.

XX. Jeremiah is beaten and imprisoned by Pashur, governor of the Temple, whose fate, after being released, he foretels (1—6). He then complains of

the hard usage given him by his enemies, but professes his trust in God, whom he praises for his late deliverance (7—14); although the prospect of future evils overpower him so far as to regret his having ever been born to a life of so much sorrow and trouble (14—18). This complaint resembles that of Job (chap. iii. 3) only it is milder and more dolorous. This excites our pity, that our horror. Both are highly poetical, and embellished with every circumstance that can heighten the colouring. But such circumstances are not always to be too literally understood or explained. We must often make allowances for the strong figures of Eastern poetry. See chap. ix. 27.

XXI. The king of Babylon being come up against Jerusalem, the Prophet is requested to intercede with God in behalf of his people. But He is declared to be against them, and the only mitigation of their punishment must proceed from their surrendering to the king of Babylon (1—10).—The four last verses seem to belong to the same subject, and to have been delivered at the same time with the next chapter, in the days of Jehoiakim.

XXII. This section of prophecy (extending to ver. 9th of next chapter) is addressed to the king of Judah and his people. It recommends to them the practice of justice and equity, as they would hope to prosper (1—4), but threatens them, in case of disobedience, with utter destruction (5—9). The captivity of the late king is declared to be irreversible (10—12), and the miserable and unlamented end of the present, Jeconiah, contemptuously called Coniah, is

foretold (13—19). His family is threatened with the like calamity, and his seed declared to be forever excluded from the throne (20—30).

XXIII. The prophecy goes on to threaten the rulers and guides of the people (1, 2), but concludes with gracious promises of deliverance from the captivity, of better times under the Messiah's kingdom, and of a future restoration of the Jews to their own land, from their various dispersions (3—8).

The ninth verse begins another subject. Jeremiah expresses his horror at the wickedness of the Priests and Prophets of Judah, and at the vengeance hanging over them. He exhorts the people not to listen to their false promises (9—22), threatens the pretenders to inspiration (23—32), and the scoffers at true prophecy (33—40).

XXIV. Under the emblem of the good and bad figs, is represented the fate of the Jews already gone into captivity with Jeconiah, and of those that remained still in their own country with Zedekiah. It is likewise intimated that God would deal kindly with the former, but that his wrath would still pursue the latter.

XXV. This chapter contains a summary of the judgments threatened by Jeremiah against Judah, Babylon, and other nations. It begins with reproving the Jews for disobeying the calls of God to repentance (1—7), on which account their captivity, together with that of other neighbouring nations, during 70 years, is foretold. At the expiration of that

period, (computing from the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar in this 4th year of Jehoiakim, to the famous edict in the 1st year of Cyrus,) an end was to be put to the Babylonian empire (8—11, with Dan. 7).—All this is again declared by the emblem of that cup of wrath which the Prophet (as it should seem, in a vision,) tendered to all the nations which he enumerates (15—29). And, for further confirmation, it is a third time repeated, in a very beautiful and elevated strain of poetry, from the 30th verse to the end of the chapter.—The talent of diversifying the ideas, images, and language, even when the subject is the same, appears no where in such perfection as among the sacred poets.

XXVI. Jeremiah foretells the destruction of the temple and city, if not prevented by the speedy repentance of the people. By this unwelcome prophecy his life was in great danger, although saved by the influence of Ahikam, after hanging for some time in suspense between the different fates or precedents of two former prophets, who had uttered the like prediction.

XXVII. Ambassadors being come from several neighbouring nations to solicit the king of Judah to join in a confederacy against the king of Babylon, Jeremiah is directed to put bands and yokes upon his neck, (the emblems of subjection or slavery,) and to send them afterwards by those ambassadors to their respective princes; intimating by this significant type, that God had decreed their subjection to the king of

Babylon, and that it was their wisdom to submit (1—11). Zedekiah, particularly, is admonished not to join in the revolt, and warned against trusting to the suggestions of false prophets (12—18). The chapter concludes with foretelling that what still remained of the sacred vessels of the Temple should be carried to Babylon, and again restored at the end of the period already mentioned. See Ezra i. 7, &c.—The name of Jehoiakim has, by some mistake of transcribing, got into the first verse in place of Zedekiah, which it should be, as in verse third.

XXVIII. One of those pretended Prophets spoken of in the preceding chapter having contradicted and opposed Jeremiah, receives an awful declaration, that, as a proof to the people of his having spoke without commission, he should die within a limited time; which accordingly came to pass.

XXIX. This chapter contains the substance of two letters sent by the Prophet to the captives in Babylon. In the first he recommends to them patience and composure under their present circumstances, which were to endure for 70 years (1—14), in which, however, they should fare better than their brethren who remained behind (16—19). But finding little credit given to this message, on account of the suggestions of false prophets, who flattered them with the hopes of a speedy end to their captivity, he sends a second, (beginning at ver. 20.) in which he denounces heavy judgments against those false Prophets that deceived them (20—23).

as he did afterwards against Shemaiah, who had sent a letter of complaint against Jeremiah, in consequence of his message (24—32).—The 70 Interpreters read ver. 15th immediately after ver. 20th which seems to be its original and proper place.

XXX. This and the following chapter must relate to a still future restoration of the Jews from their several dispersions, as no deliverance afforded them hitherto comes up to the terms of it: for, after the return from Babylon, they were again enslaved by the Greeks and Romans (contrary to ver. 8), and in no place in the world are they at present their own masters; so that the prophecy remains still to be fulfilled in the time of David or Messiah.—The prophecy opens by an easy transition from the temporal deliverance spoken of before, and describes the great revolutions that shall precede the restoration of Israel (1—9), who is encouraged to trust in the promises of God (10, 11). He is, however, to expect corrections, although they shall have a happy issue in a future period (12—17), the blessings of which, under Messiah's reign, are enumerated (18—22), and the wicked and impenitent declared to have no share in them (23, 24).

XXXI. This chapter continues the same subject, in a beautiful vision represented at a distant period. God is introduced expressing his regard for Israel, and promising to restore them to their land and liberty (1—5).—Immediately heralds appear, proclaiming on mount Ephraim the arrival of this jubilee, and sum-

moning the people to gather unto Sion (6). Upon which, God resumes the speech, and makes such large promises both of leading them tenderly by the way, and making them happy in their own land, after their arrival, that all the nations of the world are called to give attention (7—14). The scene is then diversified by a very happy invention. Rachel is represented as risen from her tomb (in a city of Benjamin near Jerusalem), looking about for her children, and bitterly lamenting their fate, as none of them are to be seen in the land of their fathers. But she is consoled with the assurance that they are not lost, and that they shall in due time be restored (15—17).—To this another tender and beautiful scene immediately succeeds. Ephraim (often put for the ten tribes) comes in view. He laments his past errors, and expresses the most earnest desires of reconciliation: upon which God, as a tender parent, immediately forgives him (18—20). The virgin of Israel is then directed to prepare for returning home, as the promised Saviour was provided (21, 22); and the vision closes with a promise of peace and stability to the Jews in their own land (23—26.)—In the remaining part of the chapter, the promises of peace, prosperity, and stability in their own land, after a general restoration in gospel-times, are again repeated and enlarged on (17—40.)

XXXII. Jeremiah, now confined for his faithful admonitions, foretels the fate of the king and city (1—5), but buys a field in Anathoth to declare his confidence in the deliverance which God had promised (6—15).

But as promises imply the use of means, the Prophet has recourse to prayer, which he begins with adoration, and ends with petitions relative to the lamentable state of the country (16—25). After which God is introduced, declaring his purpose of giving his people up to their enemies on account of their heinous provocations (26—35); promising, however, to restore them in due time to their ancient possessions, and to make with them an everlasting covenant (36—44).

XXXIII. God promises again such a restoration to Israel and Judah as shall astonish all the world (1—9). Their prosperity after that period is then described by a beautiful enumeration of circumstances (10—13). This leads to the great promise of the Messiah, and the happiness and stability which they should enjoy in his times; promises which, in so far as they respect the great body of the Jews, remain still to be fulfilled (14—26).

XXXIV. This chapter contains two prophecies; the first, delivered during the siege of Jerusalem, predicts to Zedekiah the taking and burning of the city, with his own peaceful death, and honourable burial (1—7). The second was delivered afterwards, when the Chaldeans had, for some time, broken up the siege. It reproves the Jews for their conduct towards their brethren of the poorer sort, whom they released, by a solemn covenant, from bondage, in the extremity of their danger; but compelled to return to it when they thought that danger over (8—11). For this,

God threatens them with the sword, pestilence, and famine, and with the return of the Chaldeans, who should make a desolation of their country (12—22).

XXXV. Jeremiah is ordered to go to the Rechabites, (who on the approach of the Chaldeans took refuge in Jerusalem,) and, to try their obedience to the command of their father, offers them wine to drink, which they refuse (1—11). Hence, occasion is taken to upbraid the Jews with their disobedience to the command of God (12—17), and a blessing is pronounced on the Rechabites (18, 19).

XXXVI. Baruch is commanded to write the prophecies of Jeremiah in one volume, and to read them on a fast day (1—10). The princes hearing this, and sending for Baruch, who reads the roll to them, they advise him and the Prophet to hide themselves (11—19). The king likewise, having sent for the roll, reads a part, and then tears and throws it in the fire (20—26). Jeremiah is commanded to write it anew, and to denounce the judgments of God against the king (27—31). Baruch accordingly writes a new copy, with additions (32).

XXXVII. The king sends a message to Jeremiah (1—5). God suggests an answer, and foretels the return of the Chaldean army, who should take and burn the city (6—10). Jeremiah in attempting to leave this devoted city, and retire to his possession in the country, is seized as a deserter, and cast into a dungeon (11—15). The king, after a conference with him, abates of the rigour of his confinement (16—21).

XXXVIII. The princes of Judah, taking offence at Jeremiah, cause him to be cast into a deep and miry dungeon (1—6). Ebed-melech gets the king's permission to take him out (7—13). Jeremiah advises the king, who consulted him privately, to surrender to the Chaldeans (14—23); is promised his life, but required not to reveal what had passed to the princes; to whom he accordingly gives an evasive answer, telling them only so much of the conference as related to his request for his life (24—28).

XXXIX. This chapter gives an account of the taking of Jerusalem; the flight, capture, and punishment of Zedekiah; the burning of the city, and the carrying away of the people (a few of the meanest excepted) to Babylon (1—10); also, of the release of Jeremiah, and the special orders of Nebuchadnezzar concerning him (11—14). The last four verses relate to the subject of the preceding chapter, and contain promises of personal safety to Ebed-melech, amidst the public calamities, on account of his piety, and his humanity to the Prophet.

XL. This and the four following chapters contain a distinct account of what passed in the land of Judah from the taking of Jerusalem to the retreat of the remnant of the people to Egypt; together with the prophecies of Jeremiah concerning them in that place, whither he himself accompanied them.—In this chapter Jeremiah is directed to go to Gedaliah, who was appointed governor of the land, and to whom the Jews, dispersed through the country, repair. Jo-

hanan informs the governor of a conspiracy against him, but is not believed.

XLI. Ishmael executes his conspiracy against the governor and his companions, and attempts to carry away the Jews who were with him captives to the Ammonites, but Johanan recovers them, and purposes to flee into Egypt.

XLII Johanan and the remnant of the people desire Jeremiah to ask counsel of God what they should do. The Prophet assures them of safety in Judea, but destruction in Egypt; and reproves their hypocrisy in asking a counsel with which they had no mind to comply.

XLIII. The leading men, discrediting Jeremiah's prophecy, carry the people into Egypt. Jeremiah, by a type, foretels the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnefar.—This mode of conveying instruction by actions was very expressive, and frequently practised by the Prophets.—The image of Nebuchadnefar arraying himself with Egypt, as a shepherd puts on his garment, is very noble. Egypt at this time contended with Babylon for the empire of the East. Yet this mighty kingdom, when God appoints the revolution, shifts its owner with as much ease as a shepherd's tent or garment, which the new proprietor has only to spread over him.

XLIV. Jeremiah reproves the Jews in Egypt for continuing in idolatry, after the exemplary judgments inflicted by God on their nation for that sin; and upon their refusing to reform, denounces destruc-

tion to them; and to that kingdom wherein they fought protection.

XLV. This chapter seems to be connected with the subject treated of in chap. xxxvi. Baruch appears to have been greatly alarmed at the threatenings contained in those prophecies which Jeremiah had employed him to write; and, perhaps, afraid of sharing in the persecution carried on against the Prophet. To relieve or abate his fear, this special prophecy is sent him.

XLVI. The difference between the preceding and the subsequent prophecies, in point of composition, is very remarkable; the last excelling much in majesty and elegance.—This chapter (of which verse 1st forms a general title to this and the five chapters following) contains two distinct prophecies relating to Egypt. The first was delivered previous to an engagement betwixt the king of Egypt and Nebuchadnefar king of Babylon; in which the Egyptians were routed with great slaughter, as here predicted.—The Prophet sees the mighty preparations, but they are all to no purpose, as God had doomed their fall (2—6). The king of Egypt, however, is represented as marching with all the confidence of victory, like a river overflowing its banks, and threatening all around with its inundation (7, 8). He is heard animating his troops to battle (9). But the Prophet tells that this is the time and place destined for their fall (10); and concludes with a beautiful address to the young women of Egypt, represented in the deepest distress for the fall of their heroes (11, 12).

The other prophecy, beginning at verse 13th, relates to the overthrow of the Egyptians by Nebuchadnefar, after his siege of Tyre, in the 16th year after the destruction of Jerusalem. The same event is foretold by Ezekiel chap. xxix.—xxxii.—The word rendered “valiant *men*” in the 15th verse, is by the Septuagint translated “Apis,” (the sacred bull of Egypt,) which, from a very ingenious criticism of Dr. Kennicot, seems to be the true rendering; and is probably alluded to in verse 20th and 21st.

The promise, in the conclusion of the chapter, of preservation to the Jews, after the destruction of all their enemies, has been most remarkably fulfilled, and is a very signal act of the Divine Providence. They are dispersed among all nations, and yet they are not confounded with any. No people ever remained so long unmixed as they have done. The northern nations that ravaged Europe, where are they now? The Gauls went forth in formidable bodies; but what traces are now to be found of them? In France, who can separate the original Gauls from those who settled among them afterwards? In Spain, who can distinguish between the first Spaniards and the Goths and Moors, who afterwards conquered their country? In Britain, who can pretend to say with certainty, which families are derived from the ancient Britons, and which from the Romans, Saxons, Danes, or Normans? Beyond a certain and a short period, there is nothing but obscurity and ignorance. But the Jews are distinct, and can trace their pedigree to the remotest antiquity. And

what but a supernatural Providence could have thus preserved them?—And where are now their enemies? The Egyptians, Syrians, Babylonians, Syro-Macedonians, and Romans?—All these mighty nations are vanished as a dream, as the fleeting form that deludes the fancy at midnight. But the Jews are preserved till the promises of God be accomplished. *Fear not, therefore, O Jacob; be not dismayed, O Israel, for thou shalt yet return, thou shalt be in rest and at ease, and none shall make thee afraid* *.

XLVII. Among the nations doomed to suffer from the hostilities of Nebuchadnefar, are the Philistines (See chap. xxv. 20). And the calamities predicted in this chapter befell them, probably, during the long siege of Tyre, when their country was desolated, to prevent their giving Tyre or Sidon any assistance (see v. 4). The whole of this chapter, is remarkably elegant. The address to the sword of Jehovah in the close of it, is particularly a very beautiful and bold personification.

XLVIII. The following prophecies concerning the Moabites and other neighbouring nations, are supposed to have had their accomplishment also during the long siege of Tyre. Isaiah's prophecy against this people (Is. xv. xvi.), though similar in many passages, relates to a different event.

The whole of this chapter, is poetry of the first order. The distress of the cities of Moab, with which it opens, is finely described. You hear the cries of one

* See Bp. NEWTON's Dissertations.

ruined city resound to those of another; you hear the doleful helpless cry of the children; the high ways, to either hand, resound with the voice of weeping; and the few that escape, resemble a blasted tree in the wide howling waste, (1—6). And then you see the tutelary god Chemosh, the capital figure in the triumph, carried off in chains, with all his trumpery of priests and officers. You hear wings ordered for Moab, as having no chance to escape, if it be not in another element; and you hear the victors animating each other in the ardour of the pursuit, and imprecating the man who executes his work with slackness (7—10). The subject is then diversified by an elegant and well supported comparison, importing that the Moabites increased in spirit and insolence in proportion to the duration of their prosperity. But this prosperity is declared to be at an end; the destroyer is commissioned against Moab, and his neighbours called to sing the usual lament at his funeral (11—18). And lest any part of Moab might flatter themselves with the hopes of an exemption from this calamity, the Prophet, in a very elegant manner, declares it was to be general. He represents some of the women of Aroer and Ammon, (the extreme borders of Moab,) standing at the high-ways, and asking the fugitives of Moab, What news? They inform them of the discomfiture of Moab in all its parts (19—24). God himself is then introduced, ordering for Moab the heaviest judgments, described under the metaphor of a cup of intoxicating liquor, by which he should become an object of contempt and derision.—The sub-

ject is thus continued to the end of the chapter by a variety of other figures, all expressive of the deep distress of Moab.

Verse 33, Alludes to the rejoicings customary at the end of harvest.

36, To the mournful sort of music used at funerals.

37, To the signs by which it was usual to express deep mourning, such as shaving the head, &c.

43, To the various methods of catching wild beasts in toils, pits, &c.

According to the last verse, however, the Moabites were afterwards restored to their country. See Joseph. Antiq. l. xiii. c. 17. Such promises, however, of mercy in the *latter days*, may be chiefly understood of the conversion of the Gentiles in the gospel-times (xlix. &c.)

XLIX. This chapter is a collection of prophecies relating to several nations in the neighbourhood of Judea; and, like those preceding, are supposed to have been fulfilled by the ministry of Nebuchadne-sar (see ver. 19), during the thirteen years siege of Tyre. The prophecy concerning the Ammonites is likewise predicted by Ezekiel, Amos, and Zephaniah. That concerning Edom by Ezekiel, Joel, Amos, and Obadiah. The restoration promised to Elam (39) we find fulfilled in Daniel (viii. 2). The language and imagery of this chapter is often bold and figurative, always beautiful and clear.

L. and LI. These two chapters are a prophecy relating to the fall of Babylon, interspersed with several predictions relative to the restoration of Israel and

Judah, who were to survive their oppressors ; and, on their repentance, to be pardoned and brought to their own land. This long and sublime prophecy was sent to Babylon, (as related towards the end of ch. li.), for the encouragement of the Jewish captives in that place. The significant emblem with which the chapter concludes, is beautifully improved by the sublime author of the Revelations (xviii. 21,) in speaking of the mystical Babylon, of which the other was a type, and to which many of the prophecies which speak of it, must be ultimately referred.

The observations made on the parallel chapters in Isaiah (xiii. and xlvii.) render it unnecessary to say much on this prophecy, otherwise we might trace its different steps, mark the beauty and propriety of its images, and the force and elegance of its language ;—we might show how punctually every part of the prophecy has been fulfilled, even the most unlikely, the *drying up* of those *waters* of the great river Euphrates, which were two furlongs broad, and “ deeper than two men standing one above another ;” —we might observe what assurance we have from hence, that those prophecies respecting events which are still future, whatever difficulties lie in the way, will be fulfilled in due time. But without entering on so large a field, let us at present rest satisfied with adoring that Omniscience which foretold, and that Omnipotence which executed the fall of the typical Babylon, while we look forward with the eye of Faith to the happy period in which we hope to join

in the shouts of heaven over the fall of the mystical ; when the mighty Angel shall declare she is fallen, and shall be found no more at all ! See Rev. xviii. 21. &c.

LII. This chapter was added after Jeremiah's time, probably by Ezra, after the return from the captivity, of which it gives a short account, nearly the same as in 2 Kings xxiv. 18—20, and xxv.—It is very properly subjoined to the preceding prophecies, in order to shew how exactly they were fulfilled.—It likewise forms a proper introduction to the following Lamentations, as it gives an account of the mournful events which gave rise to them.

THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH.

THE Lamentations of Jeremiah, composed after the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of Judah, are divided into five distinct chapters, which are so many beautiful Elegies, bewailing those sad events.

CHAP. I. The Prophet begins with lamenting the dismal reverse of fortune that befell his country ; confessing at the same time that her calamities were the just consequence of her sins. Jerusalem herself is then personified and brought forward to continue the sad complaint, and to solicit the mercy of God.

II. The Prophet shews the dire effects of the Divine anger in the miseries brought on his country ; the unparalleled calamities of which he charges, in a great measure, on the false Prophets.—In this desperate

condition, the astonishment and bye-word of all who see her, Jerusalem is directed to sue earnestly for mercy and pardon.

III. The Prophet, by enumerating his own severe trials, and shewing his trust in God notwithstanding, encourages his people to the like resignation and trust in the Divine and never-failing mercy. He vindicates the goodness of God in all his dispensations, and the unreasonableness of murmuring under them. He recommends self-examination and repentance; and then, from their experience of former deliverances from God, encourages them to look for pardon for their sins, and retribution to their enemies.

IV. The present deplorable state of the nation is now contrasted with its ancient prosperity, and the unhappy change ascribed in a great degree to the profligacy of their Priests and Prophets. The national calamities are tenderly lamented; but a deliverance from them is foretold. The ruin of the Edomites also, who had insulted the Jews in their distress, is ironically predicted. (See Psal. cxxxvii. 7, and Obad. 10—12).

V. This is, as it were, an Epiphonema or conclusion to the preceding chapters, representing the nation as groaning under their calamities, and humbly supplicating the Divine favour.

A greater variety of beautiful, tender, and pathetic images, all expressive of deep distress and sorrow, were never more happily chosen and applied than in those incomparable Elegies of Jeremiah.

E Z E K I E L.

EZEKIEL was one of those Jews who were carried captive to Babylon along with Jehoiakim (or Jeconiah) king of Judah. In the fifth year of this captivity, the æra from which he dates his prophecies, he began his office, which he exercised about 21 years. The commencement of this period falls on the year before Christ 595, and 34 years after Jeremiah had begun his office; so that the last eight years of Jeremiah coincide with the first eight of Ezekiel. The design of this Prophet seems to be chiefly to convince his fellow captives in Babylon that they were mistaken in supposing that their brethren who still remained in Judea were in happier circumstances than they; and for this purpose he describes the terrible judgments impending over that country; the final destruction of Jerusalem, both city and Temple; and inveighs against those heinous sins which were the cause of such calamities.

More particularly, the first three chapters contain a glorious appearance of God to the Prophet, who is commissioned to his office, with instructions and encouragements in the discharge of it. The Prophet then (to chap. xxv.) treats of the sins and punishments of the Jews, especially of those left in Judea, by several apt visions and similitudes. From thence to chap. xxxiii. he foretels the destruction of several neighbouring nations, enemies to the Jews; and from chap.

xxxiii.—xl. censures the sins, murmurings, and hypocrisy of the Jewish captives in Babylon; with which, however, he intersperses promises of their approaching deliverance, together with intimations of a still more glorious redemption in future times under the Messiah.

—The nine last chapters contain a remarkable vision of the structure of a new Temple and a new polity, for Israel and strangers; applicable in the first instance to the return from the Babylonian captivity, but in its ultimate sense, to the glory and prosperity of the universal church of Christ in future times.

The style of Ezekiel is generally very bold and majestic. It is a peculiar species of the Sublime, to which some have given the name of the *Terrible*. From the nature of his visions, however, more than from his language, he is often obscure, especially towards the beginning and end of his book.—The freedom with which he reproved his countrymen for their idolatry is said to have cost him his life; the common fate of most of the Prophets.

CHAP. I. This chapter contains that vision which the Prophet saw when he received the commission and instructions respecting the discharge of his office, which are contained in the two following chapters. It describes the appearance of God with what may well be called “terrible majesty.” He is seated on a throne of dazzling splendor, in the midst of refulgent beams of light. Radiant rainbows are his pavilion; clouds and whirlwinds his footstool. He is attended by his ministers of state, or rather ministers of grace, repre-

sented under the symbols of boldness, activity, prudence, and heavenly-mindedness; and furnished with wings, that they may execute the Divine mandates with the speed of lightning.—Connected with these ministers of the kingdom of Grace, are those astonishing wheels which denote the mysteries of Providence; animated as it were with the same soul, to shew the relation and correspondence between the kingdoms of providence and of grace, their union and harmony with each other, and the infinite ease with which God directs both.—A more minute explication it may not, perhaps, be safe to attempt.

II. The Prophet, having been overwhelmed with the glorious vision in the preceding chapter, is here strengthened and comforted (1, 2), and then commissioned to his office (3—5), and encouraged to be resolute and faithful in the discharge of it (6—8), although he must be the messenger of very unpleasant tidings (9, 10).

III. This chapter contains more particular instructions to the Prophet. It begins with repeating his appointment to his office, with which he seems much pleased (1—3). It tells him then what people are to be the objects of his ministry (4—6), what little regard they should pay him (7), and how he must persevere in his duty notwithstanding (8—11). Then, either to convince him that the presence of God should go with him, or to show how vain his reluctance would prove to that office which seemed at first so agreeable to him, he is carried by the spirit to a colony

of his brethren, in the neighbourhood, where he remained seven days overwhelmed with astonishment (12—15). He is then warned of the awful importance of being faithful in his office (16—21), and favoured with another vision, and some further directions respecting his conduct (22—27).—These last six verses seem to begin a section of prophecy, extending to chap. vi.

IV. The Prophets taught by actions, as well as by words. Thus, Ezekiel delineates Jerusalem, and lays siege to it, as a type of the manner in which the Chaldean army should surround that city. The number of days which the Prophet was to lie on his side, probably during part of each day, denoted, *1st*, The number of years which God bore with the idolatrous practices of the ten tribes; there being just 390 years from the time of Jeroboam's setting up the calves in Dan and Bethel to the migration of the last gleanings of those tribes in the captivity of Zedekiah. *2^{dly}*, The number of years he bore with the excessive sins of Judah, under the 40 years of Manasseh's evil reign, or the 40 years from the solemn league of Josiah, to the destruction of Jerusalem. And, *3^{dly}*, The duration of the siege, which was to last a day for every year they had sinned.—It appears, indeed, from 2 Kings, xxv. 1—4, that there were seventeen months from the beginning to the end of the siege; but as it was raised for some time, in order to intercept the forces of the Egyptians (Jer. xxxvii. 5), this intermission probably reduced it to thirteen months, or

390 days—Thus, God takes account of all our sins, and thus he numbers all our days.—According to Jerom, both the 390, and the 40 days were typical of the duration of the captivities of Israel and Judah.

The scanty provision allowed the Prophet during his symbolical siege, (being only about ten ounces of bread, and an English pint and a half of water,) coarse too, as it consisted chiefly of the worst kinds of grain; and likewise ill prepared, as he was allowed only human dung for fuel, —tended all to denote the scarcity of provision, fuel, and every necessary of life, which the Jews should experience during the siege of Jerusalem.—The scarcity of fuel in the East, is often supplied by the dung of animals dried, and used in preparing victuals.

V. In this chapter, the Prophet shews by another type, the judgments which God was about to execute on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, by famine, sword, and dispersion.—The *city* means the portrait of it (see chap. ix. 1); the *balance* was an emblem of the Divine justice; the *razor* or *knife* signified the Divine wrath; the *hairs*, the Jews; the dividing of the hair, the fate or punishment of individuals; the *few bound up*, (3), the small number that should be left in the land; and the next verse (4) alludes to the fate of these few, after the murder of Gedaliah.—The type or allegory is then dropped, and God is introduced declaring, in plain and express terms, the awful judgments which he was about to execute on this nation, which had proved so unworthy of those mercies with which

they had hitherto been distinguished (5—17). The most transient view of the calamities inflicted on the Jewish nation, first by the Chaldeans, and afterwards by the Romans, and the miseries and dispersions consequent on both, may show how fully those predictions have had their accomplishment.—Ask every wind of heaven, ask every nation of the earth, and they will shew their scattered monuments; preserved, as it were, on purpose to evince the fulfilling of this awful prophecy.

VI. In this chapter, which forms a distinct section, the Prophet denounces the judgments of God against the Jews, for their idolatry (1—7); but tells them that a remnant shall be saved, and brought to a sense of their sins by their severe afflictions (8—14). It is with great beauty and elegance that the Prophet, in the beginning of this chapter, directs his speech to the mountains of Judea, in order to upbraid the stupidity of his countrymen, from whom he expected less attention than even from the inanimate parts of the creation. Stupid, however, as they were, he assures them that God would make himself known to them by his judgments. A severe denunciation, often repeated by the Prophet, as an epiphonema or conclusion to his threatenings.

VII. This chapter, which also forms a distinct prophecy, foretels the final destruction of the land of Israel or Judah, (for after the captivity of the ten tribes, these terms are often used indiscriminately for the Jews in general,) on account of the heinous sins

of its inhabitants (1—15), and the great distress of the small remnant that should escape (16—19). The Temple itself, which they had polluted with idolatry, is devoted to destruction (20—22); and the Prophet is directed to make a chain, as a type of that captivity, in which both king and people should be led in bonds to Babylon (23—27). The whole chapter abounds in bold and beautiful figures, flowing in an easy and forcible stream of language.

VIII. Here begins a section of prophecy extending to chap. xii. In this chapter the Prophet is carried in vision to Jerusalem (1—4), and there shown the idolatries committed by the rulers of the Jews, even within the Temple. In the beginning of this vision, by the noblest stretch of an inspired imagination, *Idolatry* itself is personified and made an *idol*, and the image sublimely called, from the provocation it gave God, the *IMAGE OF JEALOUSY* (5). The Prophet then proceeds to describe the three master-superstitions of this unhappy people; the Egyptian (6—12), the Phœnician (13, 14), and the Persian (15, 16), giving the principal features of each; and concluding with a declaration of the heinousness of their sin, and the greatness of their punishment (17, 18).

The sacred rites or mysteries of the Egyptian idolatry, above referred to, were performed by the most *ancient* and honourable of the people, who offered *incense* in a mystic cell or subterraneous vault, called by the Prophet a *hole* or *chamber in the wall*, on which were *pourtrayed* those *creeping things* and *abominable*

beasts which they worshipped, such as serpents, dogs, cats, &c. with Apis (the sacred bull) and Isis and Osiris, under the figure of two calves, a male and a female. In imitation of these were the calf of Aaron, and the two calves set up in Dan and Bethel, called here the *Idols of the house of Israel*. A male and a female too they were, as appears from comparing 2 Kings x. 29, with Hosea x. 5, where, in the one place the masculine, and in the other the feminine name is used.

Among the Phenicians, the god whom they supposed to preside over the fruits of the earth, was believed to suffer when those fruits were cut down; and, therefore, in sympathy with him the women mourned for several days every year, at the end of harvest. To this rite of Phenician idolatry, the Prophet alludes when he speaks of the women mourning for Tammuz: a rite well known in the mythological fables of the Greeks and Romans, under the title of Venus weeping for the death of Adonis.

The Persian worship, again, as performed by the Priests or Magi, consisted chiefly in adorations paid to the sun, with the faces of the worshippers directed to the East, as described by the Prophet.

IX. The vision in this chapter seems intended to denote the general destruction of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, excepting a few virtuous individuals, who, in order to be delivered from the general calamity, were marked; in allusion, perhaps, to the custom of Eastern princes who marked their servants in the fore-

head. To indicate, likewise, that God was soon to forsake the Temple, the Shechinah, or glorious symbol of his presence, is seen to remove from the inner sanctuary to the threshold or door of the Temple (1—7). The Prophet intercedes in behalf of his people; but God, on account of the greatness of their sins, will not be intreated (8—11).

Some consider the guilty inhabitants of Jerusalem pursued by the destroying angels, as typical of the human race pursued by the Divine justice; and him with the ink-horn as representing the Mediator, interposing to save his elect. Comp. Rev. vii. 31.

X. The same august vision which appeared to the Prophet at first is repeated here, and coals of fire are scattered over the city to intimate that it was to be burned. The symbol of the Divine presence is likewise represented (4, 18, 19,) as removing farther and farther from the Temple, to signify that God's protection was about to be withdrawn from it. The wheels also, the symbols of his Providence—but we need no further comment; the wretchedness of that place or person that is forsaken by God is already complete.

XI. This chapter denounces the judgments of God against those wicked persons who remained in Jerusalem, and made a mock of the types and predictions of the Prophets (1—13; comp. ver. 3, with Jer. i. 13). When sinners come the length of scoffing at religion, the judgments of God seldom slumber. Pelatiah, who is accused of this in the 1st verse, is

cut off in the 13th.—God promises to favour those who were gone to captivity, and intimates the general restoration and conversion of the nation in after-times (14—21). Then the Shechinah, or symbol of the Divine presence, is represented as forsaking the city, as in the foregoing chapter it did the Temple; and the Prophet returns in vision to the place from which he set out (chap. viii. 1, &c.), in order to communicate his instructions to his brethren of the captivity (22—25).

XII. The Prophet proceeds, by a variety of types and parables, to convince those of the captivity, that their brethren, who were left behind to sustain the miseries of a siege, and the insults of a conqueror, would be in a much worse condition than they, who were already settled in a foreign land. In the beginning of this chapter he foretells the approaching captivity of Judah by action instead of words (1—8); he tells particularly the flight, capture, captivity, and sufferings of Zedekiah and his followers (8—16, comp. Jer. liii. 11). He is to eat his food with trembling and signs of terror, as an emblem of the consternation of the Jews when surrounded by their enemies (17—20), and then he answers the objections and bye-words of scoffers and infidels, who either disbelieved his threatenings, or supposed the accomplishment of them very distant (21—28).

Josephus (*Antiq.* xi. 10) tells us that Zedekiah thought this prophecy of Ezekiel (13) inconsistent with that of Jeremiah (xxxiv. 3), and resolved to

believe neither. Both, however, were literally fulfilled, and the event convinced him that they were not irreconcilable. Thus, blinded by infidelity, sinners rush on to that destruction against which they are sufficiently warned.

XIII. This chapter denounces heavy judgments against lying prophets who flattered the people, in the midst of their sin and danger, with false hopes of peace and security (1—9). The work of these deceivers is beautifully compared to a frail and insufficient piece of building, which can never stand against the battering elements and artillery of heaven (the Chaldean forces), which God will commission against it (10—16). In the remaining part of the chapter (17—23) woes are denounced against false prophetesses who practised vain rites and divinations, with the view of promoting their own gain by deceiving the people.

XIV. Here God threatens those hypocrites who pretended to worship Him, while they loved and practised idolatry (1—11). He declares his irreversible purpose of punishing so guilty a nation, by famine (12—14), wild beasts (15, 16), sword (17, 18), and pestilence (19—21); but that a few should be saved, who should console their brethren by sharing in their captivity (22, 23).—In the honourable mention which God makes repeatedly of Noah, Daniel, and Job, what a strong motive to intercession, piety, and prayer!—With God the righteous are in everlasting remembrance.

XV. In this and several other passages of scripture, the Jews are compared to a barren and unfruitful vine, which is good for nothing but the fire, and therefore a proper emblem of their approaching destruction.— The use of the parable or allegory is very common with the Prophets. Its excellency consists in being borrowed from an image well known and perspicuous, and such as will easily and naturally apply to the subject. And these properties may be seen in perfection in the parable before us.

XVI. In this chapter, the mercy of God to Jerusalem (or the Jewish Church and nation) is set forth by the emblem of a person that should take up an exposed infant, bring her up with great tenderness, and afterwards marry her (1—14). She is then upbraided with her monstrous ingratitude in departing from His worship, and polluting herself with the idolatries of the nations around her, under the figure of a woman that proves false to a tender and indulgent husband (15—34). But, notwithstanding these her heinous provocations, God promises, after she should suffer due correction, to restore her again to favour, under his new and everlasting covenant (44—63).

The figurative mode of describing idolatry by spiritual adultery, often used by the Prophets, is pursued with great force and at considerable length both in this and in the 23d chapter. We are not to judge of those metaphors by modern ideas, but by those of the times and places in which they were used; where it is probable many of the expressions might not sound

so harshly as they may do to us. It must likewise be remembered that the Prophet's design was to raise the highest detestation of idolatry, and that such metaphors were well calculated for that purpose.

In scripture, men are said to be related to those whose manners they resemble; hence the propriety of the terms used in verses 3d, 45th, 46th, &c.

XVI. This chapter begins with a new allegory or parable (1—10), to which an explanation is immediately subjoined (11—21).—The king of Babylon, the first of the two eagles, carried away captive king Jehoiakim, (the highest branch of the cedar of Lebanon), and left Zedekiah king in his stead. Zedekiah, though much at his ease, revolted, and entered into alliance with the king of Egypt, the other eagle. For this breach of allegiance, God makes him captive to him from whom he revolted.

In the last three verses of the chapter, the Prophet, by an allusion to a beautiful metaphor used in the preceding parable, makes an easy and natural transition to the Messiah, frequently denominated the *Branch*, and gives an elegant description of the security, prosperity, and universality of his kingdom; intimating also the rejection of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles, and the future restoration of Israel, or the flourishing of the green tree again.

XVII. From the beauty of its images, the elegance of its composition, the perspicuity of its language, the rich variety of its matter, and the easy transition from one part of the subject to another, this chapter forms

one of the most beautiful and perfect pieces of its kind that can possibly be conceived in so small a compass. And then, the unexpected change from objects that presented nothing to the view but gloom and horror, to a prospect of ineffable glory and beauty, has a most happy effect. Every lowering cloud is dispelled, and the fields again smile in the beams of mid-day. The traveller who this moment trembled, as he looked round for shelter, now proceeds on his way rejoicing.

XVIII. The Jews in Ezekiel's time complained of God's dealing hardly with them, in punishing them for the sins of their forefathers (1, 2), their calamities having been long threatened as the consequence of the national guilt (Jer. xv. 34, &c). To remove every foundation of this complaint, God tells them that he had no respect of persons (3, 4); intimating that every one, even in the present world, should generally find his condition correspond to his conduct, and more especially in the rewards and punishments of the next world; when every temporary ligament that connects societies at present shall be dissolved, and every particular person receive according to his works, and bear his own burden.—This he instances by a variety of examples, such as that of a just father (5—9); his wicked son (10—13), and again the just son of this wicked person (14—18); then a wicked man repenting (31—18), and a just man revolting (24). The conduct of the Divine Providence is then vindicated (25—30); and all persons exhorted to repentance (31, 32).—As the whole of this chapter is taken up

with the illustrating of a doctrine nearly connected with the comfort of man, and the honour of the Divine government, the Prophet, with vast propriety, lays aside his usual mode of figure and allegory, and treats his subject with the utmost plainness and perspicuity.

XIX. Ezekiel was a great master in the parabolic kind of writing, in which he deals very frequently. This chapter contains two beautiful examples of it; the one lamenting the sad catastrophe of Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim (1—9), and the other describing the desolation and captivity of the whole people (10—14). In the first parable, the lionsess is the land of Judea, the first of the young lions is Jehoahaz, deposed by the king of Egypt (2 Kings xxiii. 33, &c.); and the second lion is Jehoiakim, whose rebellion drew on himself the vengeance of the king of Babylon (2 Kings xxiv. 1, &c.).—In the second parable, the Vine is the Jewish nation which long prospered, its land being fertile, its princes powerful, and its people flourishing; but the judgments of God, in consequence of their guilt, had now destroyed a great part of the people, and doomed the rest to captivity. The *fire* in the last verse alludes to Zedekiah's rebellion, which instigated the king of Babylon to put a final period to his kingdom. See 2 Kings xxiv. 20, xxv. 1, &c.

XX. A deputation of the elders of Israel as usual, in their distress, came to request of the Prophet to ask counsel of God. In reply to this, God puts them in mind of their rebellion and idolatry—in Egypt (2—9),—in the Wilderness (17—26),—and in Ca-

naan (27—32). Notwithstanding which, God, with unparalleled mercy, promises in the end, after they should be purged from their dross, to gather them from their dispersions, and restore them to their own land. Thus, the severest threatenings of the Prophets generally terminate in the distant prospect of peace and pardon. God smites but with a view to save. He may sometimes deal out measures to his people that seem to be what he himself terms his laws (25) *not good*, but this is to be understood of either as spoken in a relative sense, implying that they are, however, *the best* which their situation and circumstances can bear. And “this is the sponge (says Montesquieu, citing this text) that wipes out all the difficulties that are to be found in the law of Moses;”—and, with equal propriety may we add,—in the ways of Providence.

The five last verses of this chapter ought to begin the next, as they are connected with the subject of that chapter, being a prophecy against Jerusalem, which lay to the south of Chaldea, where the Prophet was, and which here and elsewhere is represented under the emblem of a forest, doomed to be destroyed by fire.

XXI. The Prophet goes on to denounce the fate of Jerusalem and Judea, using signs of vehement grief, to denote the greatness of the calamity. (1—7). He then changes the emblem to that of a sharp sword, still denoting the same sad event (8—17); and becoming yet more explicit, he represents the king of Babylon,

who was to be employed by God in this work, as setting out to take vengeance on both the Jews and the Ammonites, for joining with Egypt in a confederacy against him. He is described as standing at the parting of the roads leading to the respective capitals of the Jews and Ammonites; and, doubting which to attack first, he commits the decision of the matter to his arts of divination, performed by mingling arrows inscribed with the names of the different nations or cities, and then marching against that whose name was written on the arrow first drawn from the quiver. In this case the name Jerusalem comes forward, and therefore he proceeds against it. History itself could not be more explicit than this prophecy (18—24). The profane prince Zedekiah is then declared to be given up by God, and his kingdom utterly destroyed, for that breach of oath which the Prophet tells he should be guilty of (25—27).—The last five verses form a distinct prophecy relating to the destruction of the Ammonites. This prophecy was fulfilled about five years after Jerusalem was destroyed.

XXII. This chapter contains a recital of the sins of Jerusalem (1—12); for which God threatens it with severe judgments (13—16), in order to purify it from its dross (17—22). And as the corruption is general, pervading prophets, priests, princes, and people, so it is declared shall be the punishment (23—31).

XXIII. The idolatries of Samaria and Jerusalem are represented in this chapter by the lewd practices

of two common harlots, for which God denounces severe judgments against them. See account of chap. xvi, where the same metaphor is enlarged upon as here, it being the Prophet's view to excite the utmost detestation of the crime against which he inveighs.

XXIV. The Prophet now tells those of the captivity the very day on which Nebuchadnefar lays siege to Jerusalem (comp. Jer. lii. 4), and describes the fate of that city and its inhabitants by a very apt similitude. The *pot* signifies Jerusalem; the *flesh* and *pieces*, the inhabitants; the *coals* and the *water*, the calamities they were to endure. As their crimes were great, so it is declared shall be their punishment, which God has irrevocably decreed (1—14). As another sign of the greatness of those calamities, the Prophet is forbidden to mourn for his wife, of whom God tells him he was to be deprived; intimating thereby, that the sufferings of the Jews should be so astonishing as to surpass all expressions of grief; and that private sorrow, however affectionate and tender the object, ought to be absorbed in the public calamities (15—18). The Prophet, having further expressed his prediction in plain terms, intimates that he was to speak *to them* no more till they should have the news of these prophecies having been fulfilled (19—27).

XXV. This chapter contains threatenings of the heavy judgments of God against the Ammonites (1—7), Moabites (8—11), Edomites (12—14), and Philistines (15—17), on account of their hatred to his people, and their insulting them in the time

of their distress. These prophecies were fulfilled by Nebuchadnefar about five years after the destruction of Jerusalem. The same events were predicted by several of the other Prophets, as may be seen from the citations of parallel texts on the margins of Bibles.

XXVI. The prophecy beginning here, and ending at the 20th verse of chap. xxviii, foretels the destruction of Tyre, which was taken 19 years after by Nebuchadnefar, after a siege of 13 years. The city, called Old Tyre, stood on the Continent, from which a great part of the inhabitants retired with their effects, before it was taken, to an island half a mile from the shore, where they built New Tyre, afterwards taken by Alexander the Great. The prophecy relates chiefly to Old Tyre, though it seems likewise to comprehend the New. The same event was foretold by Isaiah, chap. xxiii.

The Prophet begins with introducing Tyre insulting Jerusalem, and congratulating herself on the prospect of accession to her commerce, now that this city was no more (1, 2). Upon which God is introduced denouncing utter destruction to Tyre, and all the lesser cities depending on her (3—6). We have then a particular account of the person charged with this work; we, as it were, see his mighty hosts raising the mounds, setting the engines, and shaking the walls; we hear the noise of the horsemen, and the sound of their cars; we see the clouds of smoke and dust; we see the sword bathed in blood, and hear the groans of the dying. Tyre immediately disappears, her

strong towers shrink down in earth, and her very dust is buried in the sea. Nothing remains but the bare rock (7—14).

The scene is then varied. The isles and adjacent regions shake, as with a mighty earthquake, by the concussion occasioned by the fall of Tyre. The groans of the dying reach the ears of the people inhabiting those regions. Their princes, alarmed for themselves, and grieved for Tyre, descend from their thrones, lay aside their robes, and clothe themselves with—sackcloth?—no, but *with trembling!* Arrayed in this astonishing attire, the Prophet introduces them as a chorus of mourners, lamenting Tyre, in a funeral song or dirge, as customary on the death of renowned personages. And pursuing the same image still further, in the person of God, he performs the last office for her. She is brought forth from her place in solemn pomp; the pit is dug deep for her, and she is buried, to rise no more (15—20).

Such is the prophecy concerning Tyre, comprehending both the city on the Continent and that on the island, and punctually fulfilled in regard to both. That on the Continent was razed to the ground by Nebuchadnefar, and that on the island by Alexander. The latter used all the stones, rubbish, and earth of the old city in making a causeway to join the Continent to the island, by which means he became master of the city, and fulfilled that part of the prediction, which says her very dust should be scraped together, and her stones, her timber, and her earth, laid in the midst of

the waters (iv. 42). At present, and for ages back, this great city, once the emporium of the world, is literally what the Prophet repeatedly foretold (5, 14), a bare *rock, a place to spread nets on*. “I visited (says Maundrell) the ruins of Tyre, a mere Babel of broken walls, pillars, and vaults, without so much as one entire house. Its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches, (harbouring themselves in the vaults, and subsisting chiefly upon fishing,) who seem to be preserved in this place by Divine Providence, as a visible argument how God has fulfilled his word concerning Tyre, that it should be *as the top of a rock, a place for fishers to dry nets on*.”

XXVII. This chapter may be considered as the second part of the prophecy concerning Tyre. The Prophet pursues his subject in the manner of those ancient laments or funeral songs, in which the *præfice* or mourning women first recounted whatever was great or praise-worthy in the deceased, and then mourned his fall. Here the riches, glory, and extensive commerce of Tyre are enlarged on (1—25); her downfall is then described in a beautiful allegory, executed in a few words, with astonishing brevity, propriety, and perspicuity (26); upon which all the maritime and commercial world are represented as grieved and astonished at her fate, and greatly alarmed for their own (27—36).

Besides the view which this chapter gives the pious of the conduct of Providence and of the truth of prophecy, and besides the example it gives the critic and

man of taste of a very elegant and highly finished piece of composition, it likewise affords the antiquary a very curious and interesting view of the wealth and commerce of ancient times.—And to the mind that looks for *a city that hath foundations*, what a picture does the whole present of the mutability and inanity of all earthly things! Almost all the places mentioned, like Tyre, are now no more: they are sunk in the *deep waters* of oblivion; the *east wind* hath carried them away.

XXVIII. The first nineteen verses of this chapter relate to the king of Tyre, called in the Phenician annals by the name of Ithobalus. He seems to have been a vain man, who affected divine honours. The Prophet treats his foolish pretensions with severe irony, and predicts his doom (1—10). He then takes up a funeral dirge and lamentation over him, in which his former pomp and splendor are finely contrasted with his fall, in terms that seem frequently to allude to the fall of Lucifer from heaven (11—19).

The next four verses (20—23) announce the fall of Sidon, the mother city of Tyre; and the chapter concludes with promises of deliverance to the people of Israel from all their enemies, with a restoration to their land after their several dispersions; promises which must chiefly apply to the general restoration still future, after all the enemies of the Truth, and of the Church are subdued.

XXIX. This and the following chapters foretel the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadneſar, which he ac-

complished in the twenty-seventh of Jehoiakim's captivity. The same event is foretold by Jeremiah, xlii. 13. &c.

The prophecy opens with God's charging the king of Egypt (Pharaoh-Hophra) with the same extravagant pride and profanity which were in the preceding chapter laid to the charge of the Prince of Tyre. He seems, like him, to have affected divine honours, and boasted so much of the strength of his kingdom, that an ancient historian (Herod, l. 2.) tells us he impiously boasted that God himself could not dispossess him. Wherefore the Prophet, with great majesty, addresses him under the image of one of those crocodiles or monsters which inhabited that river, of whose riches and revenue he vaunted; and tells him that with as much ease as a fisher drags the fish he has hooked, God would drag him and his people to captivity, where their carcasses would fall a prey to birds and wild beasts (1—7). The figure is then dropped, and God is introduced (8—16) denouncing his judgments against him and his nation in plain terms; subjecting them to the Babylonian yoke, till that Empire should fall. And even after that period, it is declared, Egypt should always continue to be *the basest of kingdoms*, a prophecy which has been most astonishingly fulfilled in all the ages that have passed since it was uttered. In all that time, a great deal more than two thousand years, Egypt has produced nothing great or remarkable in learning, wisdom, or exploit: in all that time Egypt has continued a base

tributary kingdom, without ever a Prince of its own, but always subject to slaves or foreigners. It became first subject to the Babylonians, then to the Persians; afterwards to the Macedonians, then to the Romans; from them it passed to the Saracens, from the Saracens to the Mamalucs or slave-usurpers, and from the Mamalucs to the Ottoman Empire, of which it now forms a province governed by a Turkish *Bashaw* and twenty-four *Begs* or chiefs, advanced from among the slaves to the administration of public affairs; the Egyptians being possessed with a superstitious notion, that it is decreed by Fate that slaves must always rule and the natives be subject.—And who could foresee and foretel the events of such remote futurity, but that Omniscient Spirit who spoke by the Prophets, and whose image and superscription all their writings bear!

The prophecy, beginning at ver. 17th, is connected with the foregoing, as it relates to the same subject, though delivered about seventeen years later. Nebuchadnefar and his army, after the long siege of Tyre, which made every head bald by constantly wearing their helmets, and wore the skin off every shoulder by carrying burdens to raise the fortifications, were disappointed of the spoil which they expected, by the retiring of the inhabitants to New Tyre. God therefore promises him Egypt for his reward (17—20). The last verse is a promise of future prosperity to the Jews, after the enemies of God's church are vanquished.

XXX. This chapter describes with great elegance and force the ruin of Egypt and all her allies (1—10) by Nebuchadnefar and his forces (10, 11), with an amplification of the distress of the principal cities of Egypt on that occasion (12—19).—The remaining verses (20—26) are a short prophecy relating to the same event, and therefore annexed to the longer one preceding, although this was predicted sooner.

The cities mentioned in this chapter were afterwards known by different names; Noph is the same with Memphis; Pathros the same with Thebais; Zoan the same with Tanis, the metropolis in Moses' time; No or Hamon-No was Thebes; Sin the same with Pelusium; Aven or On was Heoliopolis; Phibeseth was Bubastum; and Tahapanhes was Daphnæ Pelusiacæ, where the Prophet Jeremiah is said to have been put to death.

XXXI. This very beautiful chapter continues the same subject, but in a different form. The Prophet describes to Pharaoh the fall of the king of Nineveh (see Nahum, Jonah, and Zephaniah), under the image of a fair cedar of Lebanon, once tall, flourishing, and majestic, but now cut down and withered, with its broken branches strewed around. He then concludes with bringing the matter home to the king of Babylon, by telling him that this was a picture of his fate.

The beautiful cedar of Labanon, remarkable for its loftiness, and in the most flourishing condition, but afterwards cut down and deserted, gives a lively painting

of the glory and catastrophe of both the Assyrian and Egyptian monarchs. The manner in which the Prophet has embellished his subject, strongly interests his reader; the colouring is of that kind which the mind will always contemplate with pleasure.

XXXII. The Prophet goes on to predict the fall of the king of Egypt, under the figure of a beast of prey, such as a lion or crocodile, caught, slain, and his carcase left a prey to the fowls and wild beasts (1—6). The figure is then changed, and the greatness of his fall, described by terms which allude to the destruction of the world at the last judgment, strikes terror into all the nations around (7—10). The Prophet adds that this was to be done by the instrumentality of the king of Babylon, who should leave Egypt so desolate that its waters (alluding to the metaphor used above, ver. 2) should run as pure as oil, without the foot of man, or the hoof of a beast to disturb them (11—16).—A beautiful, strong, and concise description of a land ruined and left desolate.

The remaining part of the chapter (17—32) predicts the same event in another form. God is introduced ordering a place in the lower regions for the king of Egypt and his host (17, 18). The Prophet delivers his message, pronounces their fate, and bids those who buried the slain drag him and his multitudes to the subterraneous mansions (19, 20). At the tumult and commotion which this mighty work occasions, the infernal shades are represented as roused from their couches to learn the cause. They see, and

hail the king of Egypt, and again lie down to their slumbers (21).—Pharaoh being now introduced into this immense subterraneous cavern, (see obser. on Isa. xiii and xiv.) the Prophet leads him all around the sides of the pit; shews him the gloomy mansions of former tyrants; tells their names as he goes along; shews what all their terror and pomp is come to; and concludes with showing Pharaoh the place destined for him in the midst of them, where he must henceforth lie down along with them (22—32).

This prophetic ode may be considered as a finished model in that species of writing which is appropriated to the exciting of terror. The imagery throughout is sublime and terrible; and no reader of sensibility or taste can go along with the Prophet in this funeral procession, and visit the mansions of Hades, without being impressed with a degree of awe, nearly approaching to horror.

XXXIII. The Prophet, after having addressed several other nations, returns now to his own. Previous to which he is told, as on a former occasion, the duty of a watchman, the salvation or ruin of whose soul depends on the manner in which he discharges it. An awful passage indeed! full of important instruction both to such as speak, and to such as hear the word of God (1—9).—The Prophet is then directed what answer to make to the cavils of infidelity and impiety; and to vindicate the equity and impartiality of the Divine government, by declaring the general terms of acceptance with God to be (as

told before, chap. xviii.) without respect of persons, so that the ruin of obstinate and impenitent sinners must be owing to themselves (10—20).—As the Prophet was thus under the power of prophetic impulse he receives the news of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, (about a year and four months after it happened*), and, to check the vain confidence of those who expected to hold out by possessing themselves of its other fastnesses, foretells the utter desolation of all Judea (21—29).—The remaining four verses (30—33) reprove the hypocrisy of those who heard the Prophet with a view only to their amusement, without any intention of obeying his admonitions.

XXXIV. In this chapter God reproves the conduct of the rulers and guides of his people, under the metaphor of shepherds and a flock (1—10); and promises to take the charge of them himself, to gather them from their dispersions, and restore them to their own land, under the Messiah; where their prosperity and permanent security is set forth by a variety of the most ample and beautiful terms; which must undoubtedly be referred to a period that is not yet arrived.

XXXV. The Prophet having formerly predicted the ruin of Edom, the same with Seir (xxv. 12), now resumes and pursues the same subject at greater length, intimating (14), as did also Isaiah (xxi. 11, 12), that though other nations should recover their liberty after

* In ver. 21, for *twelve* read *eleven*, KENNICOT.

the fall of the Babylonian monarchy, they should not. — This prophecy was fulfilled in the conquest of them by the Nabatheans; and afterwards by Hyrcanus, who obliged them to embrace the Jewish religion; by which means they were incorporated with the Jews, and lost in that nation; so that we hear no more of them.

XXXVI. The Edomites or Idumeans, during the Babylonian captivity, took possession of the mountainous parts of Judea and the fortresses which command the country, intending to exclude the Jews, if ever they should return from their captivity. The Prophet therefore, by a beautiful personification, addresses the mountains of Israel; and ascribing to them passions and emotions similar to those of his own breast, consoles them with the prospect of being soon rid of those usurping foes; of being freed from the dishonour of idols, under which they groaned; and of flourishing again in their ancient glory under their rightful owners (1—15).—The idolatry and other sins of the Jews are then declared to be the cause of their captivity and dispersion (16—20); from which, however, they are promised a deliverance and restoration, in terms of great force and beauty, comprehending the rich blessings of the gospel, as well as the possession of Canaan (21—38).

XXXVII. This chapter treats of the same subject in a beautiful and significant vision. Under the emblem of dead and withered bones is represented the hopeless state of the Jews in their captivity, and especially in their general dispersion. But God, contrary

to every human probability, restores these bones to life, beauty, and vigour, to intimate not only the restoration of that people from the captivity, but also their restoration and conversion in the latter day, by the efficacy of the Spirit of grace, which will be as life from the dead (1—14). The restoration of the two tribes from their captivity has already given us an earnest of the general restoration here promised to the whole house of Israel; which, according to the plain and significant emblem of the union of the two sticks, representing Ephraim and Judah, will be united in one kingdom, which will enjoy both the land of Canaan, and the blessings of the gospel under the Messiah (15—28). The vision of the dry bones reviving, is considered by some as having a remote view to the general resurrection.

XXXVIII. The sublime prophecy contained in this and the following chapter, concerning Israel's victory over Gog and Magog, relates to a period still very distant, and is therefore very obscure.—It begins with representing a prodigious armament of many nations combined together, under the conduct of Gog (supposed, with great probability, to mean the Turks, originally sprung from the Tartars, a race of Scythians who had their origin from Gog the son of Japhet,) all together attacking the Jews after having been for some time resettled in their land, consequent to the return from the general dispersion. These enemies are represented as making themselves sure of the spoil, and mercantile nations already come to their camp to

purchase it (1—4).—In this critical juncture, when the cloud is just ready to burst over Israel, God appears, to execute by terrible judgments the vengeance threatened against these enemies of his people. The Prophet, in terms borrowed from human passions, describes, with awful emphasis, his fury as coming up to his face, and the effects of it so dreadful, as to make all the animate and inanimate creation tremble, and even the whole frame of nature convulse with terror.

XXXIX. The Prophet goes on to denounce the judgments of God against those formidable enemies of his church and people (1—7, with Rev. xx. 8, 9), describes their dreadful slaughter (8—10) and burial (11—16) in terms so very lofty and comprehensive, as must certainly denote one of the greatest revolutions, and of the brightest displays of Providence which the world ever witnessed. And to amplify the matter still more, the Prophet, with peculiar art and propriety, delays the summoning of all the birds and beasts of prey in nature to feast on the slain (in allusion to the custom of feasting on the remainder of sacrifices), till after the greater multitudes are buried; to intimate that even the remainder, and, as it were, the stragglers of such mighty hosts, would be more than enough to satisfy their utmost rapacity (17—22). He then concludes, as usual, with a promise of deliverance from the captivity, and of a future restoration to all Israel (23—29).

From this short view of so remarkable a prophecy, it will readily appear that it must refer to some very

extraordinary event. The Prophet, full of his subject, dwells long upon it, sets it in all the variety of lights it will bear, and leaves no room for any one that shall come after him either to add or to improve, unless we except that passage of St John in Rev. xix. 17. 18, which certainly exceeds in sublimity that part of this prophecy which it resembles.

XL. The prophecy or vision which begins here, continues to the end of the book. The Temple of Jerusalem lying in ruins when Ezekiel had this vision, the Jews needed consolation. If they were not promised a restoration of the Temple, they would not be so desirous of returning home. It seems no model of Solomon's Temple had remained. To direct them, therefore, in the dimensions, parts, order, and rules of their new temple, is one reason why Ezekiel is so particular in the description of the old; to which the new was conformable in figure and parts, though inferior in magnificence, on account of the poverty of the nation at the time.

Whatever was august or illustrious in the prophetic figures, and not literally fulfilled in or near their own times, those things the ancient Jews justly considered as belonging to the time of the Messiah. Accordingly, upon finding that the latter temple fell short, at least in their opinion, of the model of the temple here described by Ezekiel, they supposed the prophecy to refer at least in part, to the period now mentioned. And, no doubt; the temple and temple-worship were a figure of Christ's church, frequently represented in

the New Testament under the metaphor of a temple, in allusion to the symmetry, beauty, and firmness of that of Solomon; to its orderly worship, and to the manifestations it had of the Divine presence.

This chapter contains a description of the two outward courts, with the chambers belonging to them, together with the porch of the temple.

XLI. The measures, parts, chambers, and ornaments of the temple itself.

XLII. The priests chambers, their use, and the dimensions of the holy mount on which the temple stood.

XLIII. The glory of the Lord is represented as returning to the temple, where God promises to fix his residence if the people repent and forsake those sins which made him depart from them. Then the measures of the altar, and the ordinances relating to it are set down.

XLIV. Describes the glory of God returned to the temple; reproves the Jews for suffering idolatrous priests to pollute it with their ministrations. Ordinances about the conduct of the true priests, and the maintenance due to them.

XLV. The several portions of land appointed for the sanctuary, the city, and the prince; with ordinances concerning the provisions for the ordinary and extraordinary sacrifices.

XLVI. Ordinances of worship prescribed for the prince and for the people; and the gifts he may bestow on his sons and servants. A description of the

courts appointed for boiling or baking any part of the holy oblations.

XLVII. The vision of the holy waters issuing out of the temple, and the virtue of them; an emblem of the power of God's grace under the gospel, capable of healing all but the incorrigibly impenitent, represented by the marshy ground that cannot be healed. Also a description of the several bounds of the holy land, indiscriminately shared between Israelites and Profelytes; to signify that in future times the Gentiles were to be admitted to equal privileges with the Jews.

XLVIII. The last chapter contains a description of the several portions of the land belonging to each tribe; together with the portion allotted to the sanctuary, city, suburb, and prince; as also the measure and gates of the new city.

DANIEL.

THE Prophet Daniel was descended from the royal family of Judah, and carried to Babylon after the destruction of Jerusalem, when he was about 18 or 20 years of age. He was contemporary with Ezekiel, who makes mention of that extraordinary wisdom and piety of which his book shews him to have been possessed. His prophecies concerning the Messiah, the destruction of Jerusalem, the revolution of states,

and other remarkable events, are astonishingly clear, and their very dates precisely marked. All his prophecies are related to each other, like the several parts or members of the same body. The first is the easiest to be understood, and every succeeding prophecy adds something new to that which goes before. His style for the most part is not so figurative or poetical as that of the greater part of the other Prophets, but it is more suitable to his subject, and flowing with all the ease of historical narration. That part of his book which relates to the Babylonian empire (from chap. ii. 4, to the end of chap. vii), is written in their own language, the Chaldaic; and all the rest in Hebrew. He lived in great favour with the Babylonian monarchs, and his extraordinary merit procured him the like regard from Darius and Cyrus, the two first kings of Persia. He was indeed the only Prophet who enjoyed any great share of worldly prosperity. He lived throughout the captivity, but does not seem to have ever returned to his own country. The last of his visions, which we have an account of, was in the 3d year of Cyrus (about 534 years before Christ,) when he was about 94 years of age; and it is not likely he lived much longer. He was then at Susa on the Tigris, where he probably remained till he died. His book was always a part of the scripture canon, and our blessed Lord quotes him as a Prophet.

CHAP. I. This chapter begins with giving a short account (1, 2) of Nebuchadnefar's conquest of Judea when Jehoiakim became tributary to him, and conse-

quently the 70 years captivity and vassalage began. On this expedition (taking Egypt in his way) the king of Babylon set out towards the end of the third year of Jehoiakim, but did not take Jerusalem before the 9th month of the year following. Hence the seeming difference between Daniel and Jeremiah (xxv. 1), the one computing from the time of his setting out on the expedition, and the other from the time in which the purpose of it was accomplished.—We have next an account of the manner in which Daniel and his companions were brought up at the king's court, and of their great proficiency in knowledge and wisdom.—But the most promising sign of Daniel's future greatness was his early piety, which made him and his companions choose rather to live on pulse than on the delicacies of the royal table, by which they might be polluted, as many of those meats might be forbidden by the law of Moses. It was also the custom of most nations before their meats to make an offering of some part of what they were to eat and drink to their gods, as a thankful acknowledgment that all was their gift; so that every entertainment had in it something of the nature of a sacrifice. Hence Daniel and his friends might look on the provisions which came from the king's table as meat offered to idols; by partaking of which they might be polluted and unclean. The event showed how much their conduct pleased God; and that man liveth not by meat alone, but by the word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

II. Nebuchadnefar, in the second year of his reign, or in the fourth, according to the Jewish account, which takes in the first two years in which he reigned jointly with his father, saw a dream which troubled him much, but of which nothing remained in the morning, but the disagreeable impression. Hence the diviners could give no interpretation, as they did not know the dream (1—13). Daniel then, having obtained favour from God, is made acquainted with the dream, and its interpretation (14—19); for which he blesses God in a lofty and beautiful ode (20—23), reveals both unto the king, telling him first the particulars of the dream (24—35), and then interpreting it, of the four great monarchies. His own, represented by the head of gold, in the awful form he had seen, is the first; the next is the Medo-Perſian; the third, the Macedonian or Grecian; the fourth, the Roman, which should break and bruise every other kingdom to pieces, but which, in its last stage, should be divided into ten lesser kingdoms, represented by the ten toes of the image, as they are in another vision by ten horns (chap. vii. and Rev. xvii). He likewise informs him, that in the latter times of this last monarchy, God would set up the kingdom of Messiah, which was to extend over all the world (36—45). Daniel and his friends are then promoted by the king to great honour (45—49).

III. Nebuchadnefar having erected an image, whose height (including probably a very high pedestal), was sixty cubits, and the breadth six, ordered a

numerous assembly which he had convened, to fall down and worship it; threatening, at the same time, that whosoever refused, should be cast into a fiery furnace (1—7), a punishment not uncommon in that country (see Jer. xxix. 22). Daniel's three companions Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who were present, being observed to refrain from this idolatrous worship, were accused before the king, who in great wrath commanded them to comply with his orders, on pain of death (8—15). But these holy men, with the calmest composure and serenity, expressed their firm resolution not to worship his gods or his images, whatever might be the consequence (16—18). Upon which the king, unaccustomed to have his will opposed, in the height of his wrath, ordered the furnace to be made seven times hotter than usual, and them to be cast into it, bound by the most mighty of his army, who were killed by the flame in the execution of this service (19—23). On this occasion, God literally performed his promise by Isaiah (xlii. 2.) *When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee:* for the angel of God appearing in the furnace, protected these young men, and restrained the violence of the fire, which only consuming the cords with which they were bound, left them to walk at liberty in the midst of the furnace. The king astonished at this miracle, ordered them to come out, and blessed God for sending his angel to deliver his servants, commanded all his subjects, upon pain of death, not to

speaking irreverently of the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who were promoted to great power and honour (24—30). A striking example of the interposition of Providence in favour of true and inflexible piety!

IV. Nebuchadnefar, after having subdued all the neighbouring countries, and greatly enriched and adorned his own, became so intoxicated with his prosperity, as to draw down on himself a very remarkable judgment, of which this chapter gives an account. It begins with a recital of that edict or proclamation which Nebuchadnefar had published after his being restored, the better to confirm the truth of the event here related. It gives then an account of Nebuchadnefar's dream, which intimated the loss of his kingdom and reason for seven years, on account of his pride and arrogance. So it was explained by Daniel, and so it was fulfilled in the event. At the end of that time he became sensible of his dependance upon God, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, in devout acknowledgment of the sovereign majesty of the King of kings, the Ruler of the earth, whose dominion alone is universal, unchangeable, and everlasting.

V. This chapter tells how Belshazar, while he rioted in his palace and profaned the sacred vessels of the Temple, was suddenly terrified with the figure of a hand, which wrote a few words on the wall before him. The wise men and astrologers were immediately called in, but they could neither read the writing, nor give its interpretation. With Daniel, and his

powers in this respect, he seems to have been altogether unacquainted, till the Queen (Nitocris, wife to Nebuchadnefar) had informed him. Upon this he was called into his presence, when he told the king, that as he had not benefited by the judgments inflicted on his grand-father Nebuchadnefar, but gave himself up to pride and profanity, God had written his condemnation in three words; the first of which was repeated, the more to confirm it. He further read and explained the words, MENE, TEKEL, and PERES, (the simple form of UPHARSIN). However unwelcome the interpretation might be to Belshazar, he ordered the Prophet to be honoured; and that very night the prediction was fulfilled; the king was slain, and the city taken by the Medes and Persians. This great event was also predicted at large by Isaiah and Jeremiah; and the manner in which it was accomplished is recorded by Herodotus and Xenophon.

VI. Darius, to whom his nephew Cyrus gave the kingdom of Babylon, having heard of Daniel's extraordinary merit, purposed to make him his prime minister or Viceroy over all the kingdom. This raised a great many enemies to Daniel, who contrived a scheme to ruin him; in consequence of which, he was cast into the lion's den, but was miraculously delivered. Darius, pleased and astonished at this deliverance, punished Daniel's enemies with the same death which they had designed for him, and made a decree, that throughout all his dominions, the God of Daniel should be honoured.

VII. The Prophet having related some remarkable events concerning himself and his brethren in the captivity, and given proof of his skill in interpreting the dreams of others, gives now an account of his own visions; returning to a period prior to the transactions recorded in the last chapter. The vision of the four beasts in this chapter relates (as Nebuchadnefar's dream did) to the four great monarchies which were to continue successively to the end of the world, or till they should give place to the universal, glorious, and durable kingdom of the Messiah. Those monarchies are represented by beasts, on account of their tyranny and oppression; they rise out of a stormy and tempestuous sea; that is out of the wars and commotions of the world. They are indeed monstrous productions, a lion with eagle's wings, &c. but such emblems were usual among the Eastern nations, as appears from the monuments of Egyptian antiquity, and from the ruins of Persepolis; where winged lions and the like fictitious representations are still to be seen. These figures are supposed to have been the armorials of particular nations, and are not more strange than many others still used in heraldry.

Daniel's vision, like Nebuchadnefar's dream, (see chap. ii.), represents the last (or Roman) Empire, as divided into ten kingdoms; supposed by some to be, 1st, The state of Rome, after its revolt from the Greek Emperors. 2^d, The kingdom of the Greeks in Ravenna. 3^d, Of the Lombards in Lombardy.

4th, Of the Huns in Hungary. 5th, Of the Franks in France. 6th, Of the Suevians in the west of Spain. 7th, Of the Burgundians in Burgundy. 8th, Of the Goths in Spain. 9th, Of the Britons. 10th, Of the Saxons in Britain *.

The vision further represents (24) another kingdom of a different nature, (that is the Ecclesiastical dominion of the Pope), springing up after these, and subduing three of them; which were Ravenna, annexed to the Popedom by Pepin; Lombardy by Charlemagne; and the state of Rome by Lewis the Pious. The vision then describes the character of this Ecclesiastical power (25), and marks its duration to be three and a half prophetic years, or 1260 natural years; allowing every day to stand for a year, as usual with the Prophets, (Comp. Rev. xi. 2, 3, and xii. 6, 14). It is supposed with much probability, that this period commenced somewhere in the eighth century, perhaps in 755 or 756, when the power of the Pope

* Tho' authors generally agree as to the number, they sometimes differ in regard to the names of these kingdoms, which Sir I. Newton supposes to be the following: 1st, The kingdom of the Vandals and Alans in Spain and Africa. 2d, Of the Suevians in Spain. 3d, Of the Visigoths. 4th, Of the Alans in Gallia. 5th, Of the Burgundians. 6th, Of the Franks. 7th, Of Britain. 8th, Of the Huns. 9th, Of the Lombards. 10th, Of Ravenna. —The vision of the ten horns in the Revelation (xxvii. 12.), refers to the same event; many of Daniel's visions being further unfolded in that book.

was fully established as a temporal prince, in consequence of his having been invested in St Peter's patrimony by Pepin king of France. This will bring the conclusion of the period to about the year 2000; a time fixed by Jews and Christians for some remarkable revolution; when the world (as they suppose) will be renewed, the wicked cease, and the saints reign.

VIII. This chapter relates to the Persian and Grecian Monarchies, as explained by the Angel. The emblems given of these kingdoms in the text, will appear highly proper, if we consider that a ram, or ram's head, with horns, one higher and the other lower (3), was the royal ensign of the Persians, and is still to be seen on the pillars of Persepolis; and that the Greeks of Macedonia were called *Ægeadæ*, or the people of the goat, for 200 years before the time of Daniel, from the story of their founder Caranus, who was directed by the oracle to settle where he should find a flock of goats; which he accordingly did, calling the place *Ægea*, or goats-town, and making the figure of the goat his ensign. Or, those emblems may denote more particularly those two kingdoms in the time of Darius and Alexander, when the former of them, as here predicted (7), was totally subdued by the latter.—Alexander's kingdom soon after his death was shared among four of his captains (8, 22), Cassander, Lyfimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus.—The little horn (9) or fierce king (23) sprung from one of these again, is interpreted by some of Antiochus Epiphanes, but seems more properly to apply to

the Roman power in general, which destroyed the polity and temple of the Jews, and left the nation and holy city in that desolate state in which they are to remain to the end of 2300 prophetic days, that is, years. This period is supposed to commence from the date of the first part of the vision, or when Alexander invaded Asia, in the year 334 before Christ. This will bring the close of it to about the end of the sixth millennium of the world; when, as already observed, some astonishing revolutions are expected to take place; when Rome will probably be destroyed, the Jews restored, and the reign of saints begin.

The distress of Daniel (17) on seeing the great and lasting calamities which were to befall his nation, show him in a very amiable light, and give an additional lustre and glory to his great character.

IX. Daniel, understanding from the prophecies of Jeremiah, that the 70 years captivity was now drawing to a close, pours out his soul in prayer to God, and earnestly supplicates pardon and restoration for his captive people. The angel Gabriel informs him that the city should be rebuilt and peopled, and should continue so for 70 prophetic weeks, or 490 years; at the end of which it should be utterly destroyed for putting the Messiah to death. The commencement of this period is fixed (25) to the time when the order was issued for rebuilding the temple, in the 7th of Artaxerxes. See *Ezra vii. 11.* Seven weeks (25), or 49 years, the temple was a building; 62 weeks, or 434 years more, bring us to the public manifestation.

of Messiah, at the beginning of John the Baptist's preaching; and one week, or seven years added to this, will reach the time of our Lord's death, or 33d of the Christian æra; in all 490 years, according to the prophecy.—How are the Jews blinded, who, in contradiction to so clear a prophecy, still expect that Messiah who was *cut off*, and, after suffering, is entered into his glory!

X. This and the two following chapters give an account of Daniel's last vision, wherein the succession of the Persian and Grecian monarchs is described, together with the wars that should take place between Syria and Egypt under the latter monarchy. The last part of the vision (from chap. xi. 36) seems to relate chiefly to the persecutions of the Church in the times of Antichrist, till it be purified from all its pollutions; after which will follow that kingdom of the saints spoken of above, chap. vii. 18, 27.

This chapter begins with an account of Daniel's fasting and humiliation, probably on account of the opposition which their enemies gave to the Jews in building their temple. See Ezra iv. 4, 5. Then we have a description of the glorious person who appeared to the Prophet; not unlike him who afterwards appeared to St John in Patmos, Rev. i. 15, &c.

XI. This chapter gives a more particular explanation of those events which were predicted in chap. viii. The Prophet had foretold the partition of Alexander's kingdom into four parts. Two of these, in which were included Egypt and Syria, the one *north*, the

other *south* in respect of Judea, take up the chief attention of the Prophet, as his people were particularly concerned in their fate; these being the countries in which by far the greatest number of the Jews were, and still are dispersed. Of these countries he treats, down to the conquest of Macedon, when he begins to speak of the Romans (31), and then of the Church, under that power. This leads him to speak of Antichrist who was to spring up in that quarter (36), and of those powers which in *the time of the end*, or latter days of the Roman monarchy, were to *push* and distress it (40), by which he is supposed to mean the Saracens, sprung from the Arabs to the south, and the Turks sprung from the Scythians to the north. This part of the prophecy (40—45) seems to relate to the same times and events with Ezekiel's prophecy concerning *Gog of the land of Magog*; comp. Ezek. chap. xxxviii. 2, 15, 4, 5, 16, 8, xxxix. 2, 4, xxxviii. 22, 23. The situation, extraction, army, time of their exploits, particular actions, and the Divine judgments, all correspond. See also Rev. xx. 8, 9.

Among the plain characters given of Antichrist in this chapter is, that instead of the true God, he should worship the *god the host*, or the *guardians*; so the word (Mahuzzim) translated *forces* and *strong holds*, in ver. 38, 39, signifies; and seems to allude to the worship of the host, angels, images, &c.

XII. The proper conclusion to the great revolutions which the Prophet had been predicting is the general resurrection, which the beginning of this chapter explicitly declares. And the whole concludes

with a notation of the time when these great events which he had principally in view were to have their final consummation; when the Jews were to be restored, Antichrist destroyed, the fulness of the Gentiles brought in, and the millennium or reign of saints to begin. But the precise time, till Providence opens more of the seals, cannot be fully ascertained.—We see, however, that the same term (1260 years) is fixed for the oppression of the Eastern church by Mahomed (6, 7), and for the tyranny of the Western church by the *little horn* (chap. vii. 25). And it is very remarkable, that the doctrine of Mahomed was first forged at Mecca, and the supremacy of the Pope established by a grant from the tyrant Phocas, in the very same year of Christ 606; though neither arrived at their full height of power till a considerable time thereafter (see on chap. vii. 25).—But the precise time of the beginning or ending of the periods here mentioned, the event only can tell with certainty. On such subjects modesty and prudence direct us to be silent.—On the whole, however, we may observe what an amazing prophecy this is! comprehending such various and great events, and extending through so many ages; from the first establishment of the Persian empire about 530 years before Christ, to the general Resurrection! What a proof of a Divine providence, and of a Divine revelation! for, who could thus declare the things that shall be, with their times and seasons, but he only who hath them in his power; whose dominion is over all, and whose kingdom endureth from generation to generation!

H O S E A.

HOSEA, the first in order of the 12 minor Prophets, (whose writings made one volume of the sacred canon, called, The Book of the Prophets,) exercised his office in the kingdom of Israel much about the same time that Isaiah exercised his in the kingdom of Judah. His prophecies are chiefly directed to the 10 tribes before their captivity, reproving them for their sins, exhorting them to repentance, and threatening them with destruction in case of impenitence; but comforting the pious with the promise of the Messiah, and of the happy state of the Church in the latter days. His style is so abrupt, sententious, and concise, that it borders sometimes on obscurity. And how should it not, when the subjects of 60 years prophecy are condensed into a few pages? But it is in many places moving and pathetic, and not seldom beautiful and sublime. Hosea is a bold reprover, not only of the vices of the people, but also of their kings, princes, and priests. Like most other of the Hebrew Prophets, however, he tempers his denunciations of vengeance with promises of mercy; and the transitions from the one to the other are often sudden and unexpected. He is generally supposed to have prophesied from the year 785 to 725 before the Christian æra.

CHAP. I. Under the figure of a wife proving false to her marriage vows, and bearing children that should

follow her example, the Prophet represents the shameful idolatry of the 10 tribes, which provoked God to cast them off. The whole passage is information by action instead of words. The names of the children are all emblematical. The first is intended to put Israel in mind of their unrepented guilt, and the acts of cruelty committed in their palace of Jezreel (1 Kings xxi. 1). The second and third, signifying *Not finding mercy*, and *Not my people*, denote, that in consequence of their guilt, they were to be rejected and disowned by God (1—10). He promises, however, to repair the loss to his church, by calling in the Gentiles (10), and by uniting Israel and Judah under one Head, the Messiah, in the latter days (11); when they shall again become God's people, and find mercy (chap. ii. 1).

By a wife of whoredoms (ver. 2) some commentators understand a wife from among the Israelites, remarkable for their spiritual whoredom or idolatry.

The prophecy relating to Judah, so strongly expressed (7), was fulfilled in the destruction of Sennacherib and his army, 2 Kings xix. 35.

II. The Prophet having contemplated the reconciliation which was to take place in the future age, exhorts his people to speak and to act as became those who obtained mercy of God, and to remonstrate strongly against the conduct of their mother (Samaria), whose captivity is threatened, on account of her forsaking God and ascribing her prosperity to idols (1—5). As an amplification of this threatening, the Pro-

phet enumerates a series of afflictions which were to befall her till she should be brought to a sense of her duty to God, and of her folly in seeking after idols, and falsely ascribing to them the blessings of Providence, (6—13). After these corrections however, God promises to conduct his people safely to their own land, leading them as through the desert of old, till they should enter the valley of Achor, which was, as it were, the door of the Land of promise (14, 15). He further engages to deal with them as a tender husband, and not as a severe master, as were the idols which they served (16, 17). The rest of the chapter promises them security from every evil, with the possession of every blessing under a new covenant; and that in terms full of beauty, energy, and consolation. Heaven and earth, and whatever they contain; all nature, and the God of nature, are represented as combining to make the people of God happy; so that if they only breathe a wish, one part of nature, animate or inanimate, echoes it to another, and all join in sweet harmony, to transmit it to the ear of God.—“I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn and the wine and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel.”

III. By the Prophet's taking back his wife, for whom he (her friend or husband) still retained his affection, though she had proved unfaithful,—by his entering into a new contract with her,—and by his giving her hopes of reconciliation, after she should for some time prove, as in a state of widowhood, the sin-

cerity of her repentance,—is represented the gracious manner in which God will again restore Israel, and bind them to himself for ever under a new covenant. It is further added, that this should be in the days of David or Messiah, after they should be long without king or head, as the Prophet's wife without a husband,—and without the wonted means of worshipping God; yet all the while refraining from idolatry, as she from unfaithfulness.—Such emblematical instruction is common with the Prophets.—What has already been accomplished of this prediction is an earnest of the rest's being in due time fulfilled.

IV. The Prophet charges his people with their enormous sins (1, 2); in consequence of which he threatens them with heavy judgments, particularly a famine (3). Notwithstanding this warning, he complains that there is no tendency to reformation, no mutual exhortations to repentance (4). For this reason he denounces again the fall of people, prophet, and city (5). God himself is then introduced in person, complaining of the ignorance and obstinacy of his people, and threatening to reject them for their unworthy returns to his favour (6, 7); and as their priests had a large share in the common guilt; they especially are threatened with a proportionable share of the common ruin; with shame, poverty, and stupidity of heart, (6—11). The sins of idolatry and divination are then particularly reproved and threatened (12—14), and Judah admonished to beware of these sins; which would leave her rebellious sister Israel

helpless and desolate as a lamb in a desert (15, 16). —In the last three verses the stile is varied, but the subject is the same. Ephraim is charged with idolatry, and the necessary consequence declared to be—a bitter draught! Immediately we see him bound in the wings of a mighty tempest, and driven as chaff before the wind, either to destruction or captivity.

V. This chapter begins with threatening the Israelites for ensnaring to idolatry by their sacrifices and other rites on Mizpah and Tabor (1, 2), whereby they offended the pure eye of God and defiled themselves (3). They are then threatened for their other sins, in conjunction with Judah (4, 5); their sacrifices, however costly, are declared to be unacceptable (6), and their substance allotted to the locust (7). Nor is judgment to stop here. The cities of Judah are called upon in a very animated manner to prepare for the approach of enemies. Benjamin is to be pursued; Ephraim is to be desolate; and all this is intimated to Israel that they may by repentance avert the judgment (8, 9). The following verses contain further threatenings (10—13), expressed in terms equally terrible and sublime (14). The last verse, however, gives hopes of pardon in case of their repenting, to which the Prophet in the beginning of the next chapter—

VI. Earnestly exhorts and encourages them (1—3). The metaphors used by the Prophet on this occasion are remarkably strong and beautiful. The resurrection, the morning, and the refreshing showers in their season, supply them. In their more immediate sense,

they denote a speedy and gracious deliverance, but in a remote sense refer to the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. xv. 4) and the blessings of the gospel.

But the Prophet's exhortations to repentance proving ineffectual, God in the 4th verse is introduced as a tender and affectionate parent, who could not divest himself of his bowels of mercy to his children, even when their crimes called on his reluctant vengeance for punishment. "O Ephraim what shall I do to thee?"—The last verse is a threat (not a promise) to be inflicted "by them who shall carry away captive &c."

VII. Here God complains that though he had used every mean for reforming Israel, they still persisted in their sins, without regarding the consequence (1, 2), that those who ought to check their crimes, were pleased with them (3); and that they all burned with adultery, as an oven when fully heated, and ready to receive the kneaded dough (4). Verse 5th, alludes to some recent enormities;—ver. 6th, charges them with dividing their time betwixt inactivity and iniquity*;—ver. 7th, alludes to their civil broils and conspiracies, (see 2 Kings, xv. 10, 14, 15.);—ver. 8th, to their joining themselves with idolatrous nations, and serving God by halves;—and ver. 9th, describes the sad consequence;—ver. 10th, reproves their pride and open contempt of God's worship;—ver. 11th, reproves their foolish conduct in applying for aid to their enemies, (see 2 Kings, xv. 19, and

* In ver. 6th, for *their baker*, read *Ephraim*, NAWCOTE.

xvii. 4). The 12th and 13th verses, threaten them with punishments;—ver. 14th, charges them with hypocrisy in their acts of humiliation;—ver. 15th, with ingratitude;—and the image of the deceitful bow, in ver. 16, is highly expressive of their frequent apostacies; and their hard speeches against God are to be repaid to them by reproaches in the land of their enemies.

VIII. This chapter begins with threatening some hostile invasion in short and broken sentences, full of rapidity, and expressive of sudden danger and alarm: "The trumpet to thy mouth: he cometh as an eagle."—And why?—For their hypocrisy (2), iniquity (3), treason (see 2 Kings, xv. 13, 17), and idolatry (4); particularly the worshipping of the calves of Dan and Bethel (5, 6). The folly and unprofitableness of pursuing evil courses, is then set forth in brief, but very emphatic terms. The labour of the wicked is vain like sowing of the wind; and the fruit of it destructive as the whirlwind. Like corn blighted in the bud, their toil shall have no increase; or if it should have a little, their enemies will devour it (7). They themselves too, shall suffer the same fate, and shall be treated by the nations (of Assyria and Egypt) as the vile shreds of a broken vessel (8, 9). Their incorrigible idolatry is again declared to be the cause of their approaching captivity under the king of Assyria. And as they delighted in idolatrous altars, there they shall have these in abundance. The last words predict the burning of Jerusalem, after

reproving the house of Judah for their confidence in their own strength.

IX. In this chapter, the captivity and dispersion of Israel is threatened, the prospect of which fills the Prophet with such terror, as to make him wish their women should be barren, rather than bring forth children to slavery or slaughter.

He begins with reproving them for their sacrifices and rejoicings on their corn-floors, by which they ascribed to idols, as the Heathen did, the praise of all their plenty (1). For which reason they are threatened with famine and devoted to exile (2, 3), in a land where they should be polluted, and want the means of worshipping the God of their fathers, or observing the solemnities of his appointment (4, 5). Nay more, they shall fall before the destroyer, be buried in Egypt, and leave their own pleasant places desolate (6). The time too, is declared to be at hand, according to God's revelation to the watchman (or true Prophet), whatever might be alleged by false Prophets, who pretended to have the spirit, but who in fact ensnared the souls of others, and like the men of Gibeah (Judg. xix. 22, 25, &c.), drew deep guilt on their own (7—9). In the succeeding verses, God is introduced declaring his early favour for his people, and the delight he took in their obedience; but now they had so deeply revolted, all their glory will take wing, God will forsake them, and their offspring is devoted to destruction; to destruction, twice repeated to intimate its being both sure and terrible (10—13). This extorts from

the Prophet the bitter wish they should rather be never born (14). To which God replies that their wickedness in Gilgal, where they sacrificed to idols (see chap. xii. 1), was in his eye, and repeats his former threatening to punish (14—16).—The Prophet then declares God's holy will,—“Righteous and true, O Lord, are thy judgments.”

X. This chapter treats of the same subject, but elegantly varied. It begins with comparing Israel to a fruitful vine; but corrupted by too much prosperity (1). It next reproves and threatens them for their idolatry (2), anarchy (3), and breach of covenant (4). Their idolatry is then enlarged on, and its fatal consequences declared in terms full of sublimity and pathos (5—8). God is now introduced complaining of their excessive guilt, and threatening them with captivity in terms that bear a manifest allusion to their favourite idolatry, the worshipping of the similitude of a calf or heifer (9—11). Upon which the Prophet, in a beautiful allegory, suggested by the preceding metaphors, exhorts them to repentance, and warns them of the dreadful consequences of their past courses.

XI. This chapter gives a very pathetic representation of God's tender and affectionate regard for Israel, by metaphors chiefly borrowed from the conduct of mothers towards their tender offspring. From this, occasion is taken to reflect on their ungrateful return to the Divine goodness, and to threaten them with deserved punishment. But suddenly and unexpectedly the prospect changes. Beams of mercy break from

the clouds just now fraught with vengeance. God, to speak in the language of men, feels the relentings of a tender parent,—his bowels yearn,—his mercy triumphs,—his rebellious child shall yet be pardoned. As the Lion of the tribe of Judah, he will exert his power to save his people. He will call his children from the land of their captivity and dispersion, and with the swiftness of doves they will fly to him, a faithful and a holy people.—This prophecy was partly fulfilled in consequence of Cyrus's decree, but, in its fullest extent, remains to be accomplished in the future restoration of the Jews to their own land. This is one instance among many of the language of prophecy being adapted to two or more events. We have the authority of an inspired writer to extend this remark to another part of the chapter; comp. ver. 1, with Mat. ii. 15.

XII. The Prophet, in very express terms, describes the unprofitableness and destruction attending vicious courses; particularly such as Ephraim pursued, who forsook God, and courted the alliance of idolatrous princes (1). Judah is likewise reproved (2). He is reminded of the distinguishing favour of God to his father Jacob, in giving him the birth-right; and exhorted, after his example, to strive with God (the angel of the covenant, the same unchangeable Jehovah) for a blessing, and to practise mercy and judgment (3—6). But instead of having done this, he is accused of pursuing practices that are deceitful, although pretending to integrity (7, 8). God then

threatens to deprive this people of their possessions (9), as they had rejected every mean of reformation (10), and given themselves up to work iniquity (11). And as an aggravation of their guilt, God reminds them from what small beginnings he had raised them (12, 13), and vindicates his dealing in regard of those judgments which he was about to inflict on them (14).

XIII. This chapter begins with observing, that the fear of God leads to prosperity, but sin to ruin: a truth exemplified in the sin and punishment of Ephraim (1—3). As an aggravation of this guilt, God reminds them of his former favours (4, 5), which they had shamefully abused (6), and which now expose them to severe punishments (7, 8). He tempers, however, these awful threatenings with gracious promises, and, on their repentance, engages to save them, when no other could protect them (9—11). But, alas! instead of repenting, Ephraim is filling up the measure of his iniquity, and foolishly protracting the season of deliverance, by making no struggle to attain to it (12, 13). Notwithstanding this, God promises to exert his Almighty power at length in their favour, and, as it were, raise them from the dead (14); although, in the mean time, they must be visited with national calamities, compared first to the noxious and parching east wind (15), and described immediately after in plain naked terms (16).

XIV. By the terrible denunciation of vengeance which concludes the preceding chapter, the Prophet is led to exhort his people to repentance, furnishing

them with a beautiful form of prayer, very suitable to the occasion (1—3). Upon which God, ever ready to pardon the penitent, is introduced making large promises of blessings, in allusion to those copious dews which refresh the green herba, and which frequently denote, not only temporal salvation, but also the rich and refreshing comforts of the gospel (4—7). Their reformation from idolatry is foretold, and their consequent prosperity, under the emblem of a green flourishing fir-tree (8); but then these promises are confined to the godly, and the wicked declared to have no share in them, as might well be expected under the administration of the righteous Governor of the universe (9).

JOEL.

JOEL, who directs his prophecies to the people of Judah, was contemporay with Hosea, and by some is supposed to have written before him. His stile is different from that of Hosea, but no less poetical. It is clear, elegant, and flowing, and at the same time nervous, sublime, and animated. He foretels those calamities which were hastening forwards; exhorts his people to repentance; promises temporal and eternal rewards to the penitent; with the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, and the ruin of its adversaries.

CHAP. I. The first chapter and the beginning of

the next contain a double prophecy, applicable in its primary sense to a plague of locusts which was to devour the land, and to be accompanied with a severe drought and famine; and in its secondary sense it denotes the Chaldean invasion. Both senses must be admitted; for some of the expressions will apply only to the dearth by insects, others to the desolation by war. The contexture of both is beautiful and well conducted. In this chapter the distress of every order of people is strongly painted, and not only does the face of nature languish when the God of nature is displeased, but the very beasts of the field learn to supplicate God in their distress, and reproach the stupidity of men.

II. The Prophet goes on to sound the alarm of a dreadful calamity, the description of which is so terribly worked up, that many circumstances of it are applicable to the dissolution of the world at the last judgment (1—11). The Prophet, therefore, in the person of God, exhorts to repentance, fasting, and prayer (12—17). Upon which he promises to pardon and bless them, and take vengeance on their enemies (18—20). In consequence of this, the beasts of the field, and the children of Sion rejoice at the fertility and prosperity of the land (21—27). Hence the Prophet makes an easy transition to the copious blessings of the Gospel, with which he connects the destruction of Jerusalem, which was to happen soon after the opening of that dispensation, in words nearly the same with those used by our Saviour in

speaking of the same event (Mat. xxiv. 29); adding, however, promises of safety to the faithful and penitent: promises afterwards remarkably fulfilled to the Christians in that great national calamity.

III. The prophecy in this chapter relates to the latter times of the world, when God shall deliver the Jews from their oppressors, and restore them to their own land. The prophet likewise foretells the destruction of their enemies and other unbelievers in some decisive battle (such as that mentioned in Rev. xvi. 14), and the glorious state of the Church which is to follow:—wine and milk being frequently used as emblems of the blessings of the gospel. The whole is described in a very beautiful and lofty strain of poetry, though the application of the prophecy must be owned to be dark and uncertain. It may probably have a near relation to those events predicted in Ezek. xxxix. 5; 11, and Rev. xx. 8, 9.

A M O S.

AMOS was contemporary with Hosea, though he did not probably live so long. He was not educated in the schools of the Prophets, founded by Samuel, but was called to the prophetic office from being a herdsman in Tekoa, in the territory of Judah, and sent to call the people of Israel to repentance. He begins, however, with denouncing judgments against

other nations, and concludes with comfortable promises of God's restoring the tabernacle of David, and erecting Messiah's kingdom. Several of this Prophet's images are borrowed from those rural objects which were familiar to him as a herdsman. His sentiments are frequently lofty, and his style beautiful as well as plain: for, Isaiah at the court, and Amos at the fold, were inspired by one and the same Spirit. He is generally supposed to have written about the year 787 before the Christian æra.

CHAP. I. This chapter denounces judgments against the nations bordering on Palestine, enemies to the Jews, viz. the Syrians (1—5), Philistines (6—8), Tyrians (9, 10), Edomites (11, 12), and Ammonites (13—15).—The same judgments were predicted by other Prophets, and fulfilled partly by the kings of Assyria, and partly by those of Babylon; though, like many other prophecies, they had their accomplishment by degrees, and at different periods. The prophecy against the Syrians, whose capital was Damascus, see fulfilled 2 Kings xvi. 9. The prophecy against Gaza of the Philistines by Hezekiah, 2 Kings xviii. 8, by Pharaoh, Jer. xlvii. 1, and by Alexander, Quint. Curt. lib. iv. 6.—against Ashdod, by Uzziah, 2 Chr. xxvi. 6,—against Askelon, Jer. xlvii. 5.—All Syria was also subdued by Pharaoh-Necho, and again by Nebuchadnefar, who also took Tyre; as did afterwards Alexander. Nebuchadnefar also subdued the Edomites, Jer. xxv. 9, 21, and xxvii. 3, 6. Judas Maccabeus routed the remains of them, 1 Mac. v. 3,

and Hyrcanus brought them under entire subjection. The Ammonites were likewise conquered by Nebuchadnezzar.

The earthquake which the Prophet takes for his æra is referred to in Zech. xiv. 5; and probably in Isa. v. 25. Josephus ascribes it to Uzziah's invasion of the priestly office. See 2 Chr. xxvi. 16.

II. The Prophet goes on to declare the judgments of God against Moab (1—3), against Judah (4, 5), and then against Israel, the proper object of his mission. He particularises some of their sins (6—8), aggravated by God's distinguishing regard to them (9—12), and therefore threatened with severe punishments (13—16). See 2 Kings xv. 19, and xvii. 6.

III. This chapter begins with reproofing the 12 tribes in general (1, 2), and then particularly the kingdom of Israel, whose capital was Samaria. He tells them that while they were at variance with God, they could not expect his presence or favour (3),—that his threatenings, which could not fail of being accomplished (5), ought to alarm them as the roaring of a lion (8). Other neighbouring nations are then called upon to observe, and take warning from their judgments, which would be so general that only a small remnant should escape them. The image used by the Prophet on this occasion (12), and borrowed from his former calling, is very natural and significant, and and not a little dignified by the inspired writer's lofty air and manner. Pastoral and rural occupations were held by the Jews highly honourable, and therefore

the images derived from them would not appear mean.

IV. Here the Prophet reproves his people for their luxury and oppression, by allusions to the wantonness of full-fed cattle (1), for which God solemnly threatens their captivity and ruin (2, 3). The Prophet then in irony reproves their idolatry (4, 5), and their impenitence under severe judgments by which God meant to reform them (6—11). In the conclusion the same or worse calamities are threatened; and by a very sublime description of God, the Prophet lets them know with whom they have to contend.

V. This chapter opens with a tender and pathetic lamentation, in the stile of a funeral song, over the house of Israel (1, 2). The Prophet then glances at the awful threatenings denounced against them (3), earnestly exhorting them to renounce their idols, and seek Jehovah, of whom he gives a very magnificent description (4—9). He then reproves their injustice and oppression with great warmth and indignation; exhorts them again to repent, and enforces his exhortation with the most awful threatenings, delivered with great majesty and authority, and in images full of beauty and grandeur (10—24). The chapter concludes with observing, that their idolatry was of long standing, that they increased the national guilt, by adding to the sins of their fathers, and that their punishment, therefore, should be great in proportion. Formerly numbers of them were brought captive to Damascus (2 Kings x. 32, 33), but now they must go beyond it to Assyria, 2 Kings xv. 29, xvii. 6.

VI. The Prophet reproves his people for indulging themselves in luxurious ease, and forming alliances with their powerful idolatrous neighbours (1). He asks if *their* lands or *their* lot be better than their own (2), that they should choose to worship their gods and forsake Jehovah. Then follows an amplification of the sin which the Prophet reproves (3—6), to which he annexes very awful threatenings, confirmed by the oath of Jehovah (7, 8). He next particularly specifies the punishment of their sins, by pestilence (9—11); by famine, or a drought that should harden the earth, so that it could not be tilled (12); and by the sword of the Assyrians (14).

VII. In this chapter God represents to Amos by three several visions the judgments he is about to bring on Israel; but which are averted or mitigated by the intercessions of the Prophet. The first is a plague of locusts threatening to cut off the hopes of the harvest, by attacking it in time of the second growth; the first luxuriancies of the crop being probably mowed for the king's horses (1—3). The next vision threatens a judgment by fire, which would consume a great part (4—6); and the third a total overthrow of Israel, levelling it as it were by a line (7—9). The rest of the chapter is a denunciation of heavy judgments against Amaziah priest of Bethel, who had brought an accusation to the king against the Prophet (10—17).

VIII. This chapter begins with a fourth vision, denoting the certainty and nearness of the destruction of Israel (1—3). The Prophet then proceeds to re-

prove and threaten their oppression and injustice (4—7), and foretels that in time of their solemn festival the sun should be darkened by an eclipse (in those days thought ominous), which should turn their joy into mourning, and be a sign of those calamities which were predicted by the words in their figurative sense (8—10). He concludes with threatening a famine of the word of God, which they now made so light of (11—14).

According to Archbishop Usher (A. M. 3213), there were, about eleven years after Amos prophesied, two great eclipses of the sun, the one at the feast of tabernacles, the other at the time of the passover. This prophecy, therefore, may be considered as one of many which have a double meaning, and apply to more than one event.

IX. The first part of this chapter contains another vision in which God is represented as declaring with great majesty the final ruin of the kingdom of Israel, and the general dispersion of its people; without showing them any more respect than to other nations to whom his Providence also extended (1—10). The latter part of the chapter (11—15) concludes the prophecy as usual, with large and comfortable promises of restoration and prosperity along with the Gentile world, in Messiah's kingdom. Here, as elsewhere, the copious fruits of the harvest and of the vintage, which, from their abundance, would be so long of gathering, form a fit emblem of the plenitude of gospel blessings.

O B A D I A H.

THIS Prophet is thought to have been contemporary with Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who prophesied the same destruction to the Edomites, (or descendants of Esau), on account of their cruel insultings over the Jews after their city was taken. The prophecy, according to Usher, was fulfilled about five years after the destruction of Jerusalem.

The chapter begins with representing God as calling the nations against Edom, and declaring that his strong holds should not save him (1—4).—That not a remnant—not a gleaningshould be left of him (5).—That the enemy would search out his people, and totally subdue them;—and that none of their allies should stand by them (6—9). He then enlarges on their particular offence, and threatens them with a speedy recompence (10—16). The Babylonians accordingly subdued and expelled them from Arabia Petraea, of which they never afterwards recovered possession.

The latter part of the prophecy (17—21), foretells the restoration of the Jews, their victory over their enemies, and their flourishing state in the latter times. This prophecy, was no doubt, fulfilled in part by the return from the Babylonian captivity, and by the conquests of the Maccabees over the Edomites (1 Mac. v. 3—5, 65, &c.), but must have a further aspect to events still future.

J O N A H.

JONAH, a native of Gath-hepher in Galilee, and an eminent type of our Saviour's resurrection, is the most ancient of those Prophets whose writings are contained in the sacred Canon. He is supposed to have prophesied to the ten tribes towards the beginning of Jehoahaz's reign (before Christ 862), or according to some, in the reign of his grandson Jeroboam, about forty years later. Perhaps he may have exercised his office in both periods. His prophecy is a simple narrative, containing nothing poetical, excepting his prayer (chap. ii.), which is a most beautiful and sublime ode.

CHAP. I. Jonah, commissioned by God to go to Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, probably imagined that his mission would prove both dangerous and unavailing, and especially that his veracity, and character as a Prophet, might be affected by God's merciful change of purpose (iv. 2). He therefore attempted to flee to Tarshish. But meeting with a tempest, which had in it something so extraordinary, that the mariners concluded they had among them some notorious sinner, Jonah, by the decision of a lot, is cast over-board, and swallowed by a large fish prepared for the purpose.—His miraculous deliverance from thence would afterwards give weight to his message, tend to spread the knowledge of Jehovah, and show to succeeding Prophets, that God was able to enforce his commands.—The time of Jonah's durance,

was a type of our Saviour's continuance in the grave, (Luke xi. 30.); actions and events under the Old Testament, being so directed as to fore-shadow those things which were to take place under the New.

II. This chapter (except the first verse and the last, which make a part of the narrative) contains a beautiful prayer, or hymn, formed of those devout thoughts which Jonah had in the belly of the fish, with a thanksgiving for his miraculous deliverance.

III. Jonah is sent again to Nineveh, a city of three days journey, (being 60 miles in circumference, according to Diodorus Siculus), whose inhabitants, in consequence of the Prophet's preaching, repented in dust and ashes. And though the effects of this repentance were of no long duration, as we learn from the other Prophets, and from the fate of the city afterwards, yet God rewarded it with a lengthening out of their prosperity for 150 years.

IV. Jonah, dreading to be thought a false Prophet, repines at God's mercy in sparing the Ninevites, whose destruction he seems to have expected from his retiring to a place without the city, about the close of the 40 days. But how does he glorify that mercy which he means to blame! And what an amiable picture does he give of the compassion of God (2)! This attribute of the Deity is still further illustrated by his tenderness and condescension to the Prophet himself, who, with all his spiritual gifts, had much of human infirmity. What pity and honour did God show him in providing for him a miraculous shelter?

And what a gentle reproof did he give him, when uneasy at its being removed?—"Thou hast had pity on the gourd, and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city wherein are more than six score thousand (infants), that cannot discern between the right hand and left;—and also much cattle?"

What an endearing description of him who preserveth man and beast!

M I C A H.

THE Prophet Micah lived at the same time with Isaiah and Hosea. His prophecies concern both Israel and Judah. He reproves them for their sins with great warmth and indignation; foretels their several captivities; and for the comfort of the godly, delivers many things concerning the Messiah, his incarnation, the place of his birth, his offices, and the happiness and glory of his Church, after triumphing over her enemies, in the latter day.—His stile is nervous and concise, sometimes obscure, but generally animated and poetical, resembling in many places that of Isaiah.

CHAP. I. The Prophet begins with challenging attention to the awful descent of Jehovah, coming to execute his judgments against a sinful nation (1—5); first against Samaria, whose fate the Prophet laments in the dress of mourners, and with the doleful cries of the fox or ostrich (6—8); and then against Jerusalem, which

is threatened with the same stroke, namely, the invasion of Sennacherib. Other cities of Judah are likewise threatened, and their danger represented to be so great as to oblige them to have recourse for protection even to their enemies the Philistines (14), from whom they wished at first to conceal their situation (10).—But all resources are declared vain; their captivity is resolved on.

II. Here the Prophet denounces a woe against the devisers of wickedness, the covetous and the oppressor (1, 2). God is introduced in person, as devising their unavoidable ruin (3). An Israelite is then introduced as a mourner, personating his people, and lamenting their fate (4).—Their total expulsion is now threatened, on account of their manifold offences (5—10). But this (says Micah) will not please you so much as the words of your lying Prophets (11). However, after you are visited for your transgressions, I too can prophecy comfort to you in future times; your restoration shall be effected, Jehovah will redeem you (12, 13).—This chapter relates chiefly to Israel.

III. In this chapter the Prophet inveighs with great boldness and spirit against the princes and Prophets of Judah, and foretels the destruction of Jerusalem, as the consequence of their iniquity. The last words are cited by Jeremiah xvi. 18.

IV. The Prophet here foretels the establishment and prosperity of Messiah's kingdom; its peaceful tendency, universality, and everlasting duration (1—4). Then break in a chorus of his people, declaring their high

satisfaction, and peculiar happiness in being members of his kingdom (5). The Prophet then, in the person of God, resumes the subject; foretels the restoration and future prosperity of Israel (6—8); and therefore exhorts them not to be discouraged at their approaching captivity, as they should not only be delivered from it, but likewise triumph over all their enemies; alluding perhaps to the same great events with those predicted by Ezekiel (xxxviii, &c.) and some of the other Prophets; and which still remain to be fulfilled: for the conquests of the Maccabees will by no means come up to the beautiful and highly worked up allegory in ver. 13. — The first three verses of this chapter are borrowed from Isaiah (ii. 2, &c.) and the fourth for beauty of imagery and elegance of expression, is worthy of him.

V. The Prophet goes on to comfort his people under those approaching calamities formerly threatened, and now alluded to (ver. 1); giving them, however, to understand that God would not fully vindicate his people till the Messiah should be born, and Judah and Israel converted along with their brethren the Gentiles, and brought in to the large and peaceful pastures of this great Shepherd (2—4). After this illustrious prophecy he goes on to foretel the downfall of the Assyrians, meaning perhaps here the enemies of the Church in general, and her triumphs over them in the latter times (5, 6, with ver. 15, and Ezekiel xxxviii.), though some understand it of Antiochus and the seven famous Maccabees, with their eight royal successors,

from Aristobulus to Antigonus. Perhaps the prophecy like many others may refer to more events than one. Verse 7th was fulfilled by the Jews spreading the knowledge of the true God during their captivity, and so paving the way for the gospel; and by their preaching the gospel when Messiah appeared, but will be more signally fulfilled after their conversion and restoration: (see Romans xi. 12—15). Ver. 8th, 9th, relate to their future triumphs over their enemies. Notwithstanding which, the Babylonians must in the mean time chastise them for their sins, and destroy the objects of their idolatrous worship (10—14)—though God will at length cut off these, and all the other enemies of his people in their turn (14, 15).

VI. This chapter reproves and threatens. The manner of raising the attention (1, 2) by calling on man to urge his plea in the face of all nature, and on the inanimate creation to hear the expostulation of Jehovah with his people, is awakening and sublime. The words of Jehovah follow in ver. 3d, 4th, 5th. And God's mercies having been set forth to his people, one of them is introduced in a beautiful dramatic form asking what his duty is towards so gracious a God (6, 7). The answer follows in the words of the Prophet (8); who goes on to upbraid the people of his charge, with their injustice and idolatry, to which he ascribes their want of success in their lawful undertakings, and those heavy calamities which were now impending.

VII. The Prophet begins this chapter with lamenting the decay of piety and the growth of ungodliness,

using a beautiful allegory to imply (as explained in ver. 2) that the good man is so seldom to be found as the early fig (of best quality) in the advanced season, or the cluster after the vintage (1, 2). He then reproves and threatens them with force and spirit (3—6), in terms so expressive of great calamities as to be applied in the New Testament to times of the hottest persecution (see Mat. x. 35, 36). Notwithstanding which a Jew is immediately introduced declaring in the name of his captive people, the strongest faith in the mercy of God, the most submissive resignation to his will, and the firmest hope in his favour in future times, when they should triumph over their enemies (7—10). The Prophet upon this resumes the discourse, promises them great prosperity and increase (11, 12), although they must first be captives on account of their sins (13); adding, like a true son of Abraham, a beautiful intercession in their behalf (14). After which God is introduced promising in very ample terms their future restoration and prosperity (15—17). And then to conclude, a chorus of Jews is introduced, singing a beautiful hymn of thanksgiving, suggested by the gracious promises which precede (18—20).

N A H U M.

NINEVEH, after the preaching of Jonah, did not continue long to bring forth the fruits of repentance. It soon returned to its former courses. Nahum, therefore, supposed to have lived in the reign of Hezekiah, and about 90 years later than Jonah, foretels its destruction, which accordingly took place about 60 years thereafter, when the Medes and Babylonians (under Cyaxares and Nabopolassar) rebelled together and overturned the Assyrian Empire.—Perhaps none of the lesser Prophets equal Nahum in sublimity, fire, and boldness of spirit. His prophecy is one entire poem relating almost wholly to the destruction of Nineveh, the capital of that people who carried away ten of the tribes captive, and greatly harrassed the other two. The subject was therefore highly interesting, and rendered still more so by the manner in which it is handled. The exordium is magnificent; the preparation for the destruction of the city, and the destruction itself, are painted in the most shining colours;—colours whose brightness, even in a literal prose translation, no attentive mind can contemplate without feeling some emotion, congenial to that which glowed so fervently in the inspired writer's soul.

CHAP. I. This chapter opens the prophecy with a sublime description of the justice and power of God, tempered with lenity and goodness (2—8). To this succeeds a sudden address to the Assyrians, with a lively picture

of their perplexity and overthrow, as devisers of evil against Jehovah (9—11). Then appears Jehovah himself proclaiming freedom to his people from the Assyrian yoke, and the destruction of the Assyrian idols (12—14); upon which the Prophet, in a most lively manner, calls the attention of Judah to the approach of the messenger who brings such glad tidings; and exultingly bids his people celebrate their festivals and present their thankofferings without fear of the enemy (15).

II. Nineveh is now called on to prepare for the approach of her enemies, the instruments of Jehovah's vengeance; and the military array and muster, the very arms and dress of the Medes and Babylonians, their rapid approach to the city, the process of the siege and the inundation of the river, the capture of the place, the captivity, lamentation, and flight of the inhabitants, the sacking of the wealthy city, and the consequent desolation and terror, are all described in the true spirit of Hebrew poetry, with many pathetic, vivid, and sublime images (1—10). This description is succeeded by a very lively and lofty allegory (11, 12), which is immediately explained and applied to the city of Nineveh (13).—It is she too that is meant in the tender and beautiful allegory in ver. 7th, which represents her as a great princess led captive, with her maids of honour attending her, bewailing her and their own condition, by beating their breasts, and by other expressions of sorrow.

III. The Prophet goes on, denouncing a woe against Nineveh for her perfidy and violence. He musters up before our eyes the number of her chariots and cavalry, points to her burnished arms, and to the great and unrelenting slaughter which she spreads around her (1—3). He assigns her idolatry as one cause of her ignominious and unpitied fall (4—7), which he compares to the dreadful destruction of No, a famous city of Egypt (8—11). He then beautifully describes the ease with which her strong holds should be taken (12), and her pusillanimity during the siege (13); pronounces that all her preparations (14, 15), her numbers, opulence, and chieftains would be of no avail (15—17); and that her tributaries would desert her (18). The whole concludes with declaring the incurableness of her disease, and her utter destruction; and with introducing the nations she had oppressed, exulting with joy at her fall (19).

As the following passage of Diodorus Siculus throws light on several parts of this prophecy (particularly chap. i. ver. 8), it may not be improper to subjoin it:—"There was an old prophecy or tradition that Nineveh should not be taken till the river (the Tigris which defended part of the city) became its enemy. And in the third year of the siege, this river, being swollen with continual rains, overflowed part of the city, and destroyed the walls for twenty furlongs. The king thinking the oracle was fulfilled, and the river become an enemy, built a large funeral pile in

the palace, and collecting all his wealth, concubines, and eunuchs, set fire to the pile, involving them, himself, and the palace, in one common ruin."

When Nahum uttered his prophecy, Nineveh was the capital of the greatest empire in the world. It was 60 miles in compass, and well peopled. Its walls were 100 feet high, and so thick that three chariots could go abreast on them, and defended with 1500 towers 200 feet in height. What probability was there that such a city should ever be so totally destroyed that the place where it stood should not be known? Yet Lucian, who was a native of a neighbouring country, and flourished in the 2d century, affirms that no traces of Nineveh remained even then; and now its very situation is hardly known. Such an utter end hath been made of it; and such is the truth of the Divine predictions!

H A B A K K U K.

As Nahum prophesied the destruction of the Assyrians, who carried the 10 tribes captive, so Habakkuk foretels the destruction of the Chaldeans, who completed the captivity of the two tribes which remained. This Prophet is supposed to have lived about the same time with Jeremiah, and holds a distinguished rank among the sacred poets. Whoever reads his prophecy must be struck with the grandeur of its imagery, and

the sublimity of its stile; especially of the hymn or prayer in the 3d chapter, which hardly any thing of the kind can be supposed to excel.

CHAP. I. The Prophet enters very abruptly on his subject, his spirit being kindled with indignation against the rapid progress of vice and impiety (1—4). Upon which God is introduced, threatening very awful and speedy judgments, to be inflicted by the ministry of the Chaldeans (5—10), though they should themselves be visited for their sins soon after (11). The Prophet then, making a sudden transition, expostulates with God (probably personating the Jews) for permitting a nation still more wicked than themselves, as they supposed, to oppress and devour them, as fishers or fowlers do their prey (12—17).

II. The Prophet, expecting a return to his expostulation, is answered by God that he will in due time perform the promises made to his people, of deliverance by the Messiah (implying also the nearer deliverance by Cyrus), and that in the mean time good men will live by faith (1—4). The fall of the Chaldeans, and of their ambitious monarch is then predicted (4—10); and by a strong and bold personification the very stone and wood of those magnificent buildings, which he had raised by oppression and bloodshed, pronounce his woe, and in responsive taunts upbraid him (11, 12). The Prophet then resumes the subject, observing that God infatuates the wicked first, and then displays his power in their destruction (13, 14). He adds, that for the cup of idolatry

which Babylon gave, she will receive the cup of fury, by the insurrection of mighty enemies (the Medes and Persians) rushing like wild beasts to destroy her (15). In the midst of this distress the Prophet naturally asks what she had gained by her idols, exposes the absurdity of trusting in them (18, 19), and calls on the whole world to stand in awe of the everlasting Jehovah (19).

III. The Prophet having seen the calamities which were to be brought on his country by the ministry of the Chaldeans, and the punishments which awaited the Chaldeans themselves, partly struck with terror, and partly revived with hope and confidence in the Divine mercy, beseeches God to hasten the redemption of his people (2). Such a petition would naturally lead his thoughts to the astonishing deliverance which God vouchsafed to the same people of old; and the inference from it was obvious, that he could with the same ease deliver their posterity now. But, hurried on by the fire and impetuosity of his spirit, he disdains to wait the process of connecting these ideas, and bounds at once into the midst of his subject; "God came from Teman, &c." He goes on to describe the majesty and might which God displayed in conducting his people to the land of promise; selecting the most remarkable circumstances, and clothing them in the most lofty language. As he goes along his fancy becomes more glowing, till at length he is transported to the scene of action, and become an eye-witness of the wonders he describes: "I beheld the tents of Cushan in affliction (7)." After having touched on the prin-

cipal circumstances of that deliverance which he celebrates, he returns (12) to what passed before them in Egypt; his enthusiasm having led him to begin (3) in the midst of his subject.—And at last he ends the hymn as he began it, with expressing his awe of the Divine judgments, and his firm trust in the mercy and goodness of God while under them, and that in terms of such singular beauty, elegance, and sublimity, as to form a very proper conclusion to this admirable piece of Divine composition.—It would seem from the title, and from the note annexed to the end, that it was set to music, and sung in the service of the Temple.

ZEPHANIAH.

ZEPHANIAH prophesied much about the time that Jeremiah entered on his prophetic office, and in his method and subject resembles him. He directs his speech chiefly to the people of Judah, and foretels their captivity by the Chaldeans, on account of their idolatry and other heinous sins, of which he earnestly exhorts them to repent. He then denounces judgments against other neighbouring nations, and from them returns to the people of his charge. Afterwards he exhorts all the good and faithful among them to patience, and comforts them with the promise of God's restoring and enlarging the church in the time of the Messiah; declaring also how he would sanctify, bless, and glorify them, by exterminating all their enemies.

CHAP. I. This chapter begins with denouncing God's judgments against Judah and Jerusalem. Idolaters and sinners of several other denominations are then particularly threatened, and their approaching visitation enlarged on, by the enumeration of several striking circumstances which tend greatly to heighten its terrors.

II. The Prophet having declared the judgments which were ready to fall on his people, exhorts them (especially the godly among them) to sincere repentance, before these judgments overtake them (1—3). He then digresses to foretell the fate of other neighbouring and hostile nations, the Philistines (4—7), Moabites and Ammonites (8—11), Ethiopians (12), and Assyrians (13). In the close of the chapter (14—15), Nineveh reduced to ruins, is beautifully contrasted with its former flourishing condition.—These prophecies were accomplished chiefly in the conquests of Nebuchadnefar.

III. The Prophet again returns to reprove Jerusalem and all her guides and rulers, for their perseverance in guilt, notwithstanding all the warnings and corrections which they received from God (1—7). They are encouraged, however, after they shall be punished and cured of their idolatry, to look for mercy and restoration (8—13), and excited to hymns of joy at the prospect (14—17). After which the Prophet concludes (as the lesser Prophets generally do) with large promises of future favour and prosperity (18—20).

H A G G A I.

HAGGAI, the first of those three Prophets who were sent to the Jews after their return from the Babylonian captivity, lived about 520 years before the Christian æra. The occasion of his prophecy was the stop which was put to the building of the Temple during many years after the foundation of it had been laid. The people had applied themselves to the building of their own houses, and neglected the house of God; till moved at length by the earnest exhortations of the Prophets, they resumed the work, and completed it in a few years. The stile of this Prophet is for the most part plain and prosaic; interspersed, however, with several passages of much sublimity and pathos.

CHAP. I. The Prophet reproves the people, and particularly their ruler and their high-priest, for their negligence and delay in rebuilding the Temple, and tells them that this their neglect was the cause of their having been visited with unfruitful seasons and other marks of the Divine displeasure. He encourages them to set about the work, and on their doing so, promises that God will be with them.

II. When this prophecy was uttered, (about four years before the Temple was finished, and sixty-six after the former one was destroyed), it appears that some old men among the Jews were greatly dispirited on account of its being in appearance so much short

of the glory and splendour of the former house (com. Ezra iii. 12). To raise their spirits, and encourage them to proceed with the work, the Prophet tells them that the glory of the second Temple should be greater than that of the first*, which was accomplished by the Messiah's honouring it with his presence and preaching, after that great revolution, which the Prophet also foretold (6) was to introduce the last dispensation (1—9). From ver. 10th to 19th, he shews the people, that the oblations brought by their priests could not sanctify them, while they were unclean by their neglect of the Temple; and, to convince them that the hard times they had experienced during that neglect (about fifteen years) proceeded from this cause, he promises them fruitful seasons from that day forward. The conclusion (20—23) foretels the mighty revolution that should take place by the setting up of the kingdom of Christ, under the type of Zerubbabel. Perhaps the words may have likewise a reference to some temporal revolutions then near, such as the commotions of Babylon in the reign of Darius, the Macedonian conquests in Persia, and the wars between the successors of Alexander. Others refer the prophecy to our Lord's second coming, to which it is no

* It does not appear that any nominal distinction was ever made in history or ordinary language, any more than in scripture, between the Temple rebuilt by Zerubbabel, and the same Temple as repaired by Herod; both being comprehended, as here, under the general name of the *second* Temple.

doubt applicable; and when it will be in the most signal manner fulfilled. There is generally less danger of mistake in extending, than in limiting the sense of prophecy.

ZECHARIAH.

THE design of the first part of Zechariah's prophecy like that of his contemporary Haggai, is to encourage the Jews to go on with rebuilding the Temple; by giving them assurance of God's aid and protection. From this he proceeds to foretel the glory of the Christian church (the true temple of God), under its great High-Priest and Ruler Jesus Christ, of whom Zerubabel and Joshua were figures. He treats of his death, sufferings, and kingdom, in many particulars not mentioned by any other of the lesser Prophets before him; every thing relating to those great events becoming more explicit in proportion as their accomplishment drew nearer.—His stile, like that of Haggai, is for the most part prosaic, only more obscure towards the beginning, on account of his types and visions. Towards the end, he is more plain, as well as more elevated and poetical. This difference in the stile, among other reasons, makes it probable that the last six chapters were written by Jeremiah, or some other Prophet, though annexed to this prophecy of Zechariah. See the account of chap. ix.

CHAP. I. The Prophet begins with exhorting his

people to repentance, as they would value the favour of God, and avoid such punishments as were inflicted on their fathers (1—6). He then relates two prophetic visions. The first represents so many angels returning (probably from the various kingdoms over which they presided) to give God an account of their expedition and ministry. They are represented as having horses to denote their power and celerity; and these of various colours, to denote the variety of their ministrations. They tell that all the earth was quiet and at rest (7—11); the Persian Empire and nations connected with Judea at that time, enjoying tranquility and peace, though the affairs of the Jews were still unsettled. Hence the angel of the land of Judah takes an opportunity of interceding in behalf of Jerusalem (12), and obtains for her large promises of peace and prosperity (12—16), some of them probably extending to times still future (17). The other vision in this chapter (18—21), intimates to the Jews, that God would give them security from their enemies, while they were building the Temple, and that these enemies should themselves be destroyed on every side.

II. The vision with which the chapter opens portended great increase and prosperity to Jerusalem. Accordingly Josephus tells us (*J. Wars*, V. iv. 2), that “the city overflowing with inhabitants, extended beyond its walls,” (as predicted in verse fourth), and acquired much glory during the time of the Maccabees; although these promises, and particularly the

sublime image in the fifth verse, may have a still greater reference to the glory and prosperity of the future Jerusalem (comp. Rev. xx. 9). In consequence of these promises, the Jews still inhabiting Babylon, and the regions round about, are called upon to hasten home, that they might not be involved in the fate of their enemies, who were to fall a prey to the nations which they had formerly subdued; God's love and zeal for his people, leading him to glorify them by humbling all their foes (6—9). The promises of God's presence with his church, and her consequent increase and prosperity set forth in the following verses (10—13), were in some measure fulfilled in the great number of proselytes made to Judaism, after the return from the captivity, but remain still to be more fully accomplished after the future restoration of the Jews under the gospel.

III. While the Jews were rebuilding their Temple, their adversaries endeavoured to stop the work (Ezra v). This vision is therefore calculated to give them the strongest encouragement, that God, after plucking them as brands out of the fire (or captivity of Babylon), would not now give them up, but would still continue to prosper and favour them; and that notwithstanding the interruptions they should meet with, the work would be finished under the superintendence of Providence, and their high-priest, clothed in his pontifical robes, would soon officiate in the Holy of holies (1—7). The subject is then, by an easy transition, applied to a great future deliverance and restoration, of

which Joshua and his companions, delivered now, are declared to be figures or types, for that the Messiah or Branch, the great High Priest typified by Joshua, would be manifested; and, like the principal stone represented in the vision, become the chief corner-stone of his Church; that his watchful Providence would guard it, and that by his atonement, he would procure to it peace and pardon (8—10).

IV. The Prophet, overpowered by his last vision, is roused by the angel to behold another (1), intended also to assure the Jews of the success of Joshua and Zerubbabel in building the Temple, and surmounting every obstacle in the way, till at length, by the good providence of God, it should be finished, amidst the joyful acclamations of the spectators. It is plain, that the golden candlestick is the Jewish state; the oil, the spirit of God, in opposition to human efforts; and the two anointed ones, Joshua and Zerubbabel. The application of this prophecy (in its secondary sense) to the Messiah, is like that of the preceding one, plain and obvious.

V. This vision, by the representation of a large flying roll, denotes that God's judgments against the wicked are great and swift. The vision seems to intimate further, that the Babylonian captivity happened in consequence of the wickedness committed by the Jews before that period, and that a like calamity might befall them, if they relapsed into their former crimes; some of which are mentioned, a part for the whole. The chapter may be considered altogether as an awful

admonition, that a multiplicity of curses, and particularly dispersion and captivity should be the punishment of national guilt and depravity. The woman in the vessel like an ephah, is wickedness personified; the lead, denotes the intolerable weight of the Divine wrath pressing down the wicked; the two women, may be two agents in the vision, or, according to the Chaldee Paraphrast, the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah; the two wings, may denote the Assyrians and Babylonians; the wind in their wings the rapidity of their conquests, and the lifting and carrying the ephah to the land of Shinar, the carrying the Jews to captivity in Babylon.

VI. In this chapter, the first vision of the four chariots drawn by several sorts of horses (1—3), denotes the succession of the four empires. The *red* horses in the first, are supposed to be emblematic of the bloody cruelty of the Babylonian empire, especially towards the Jews. The *black* denote the Persian empire, which, by subduing the Chaldeans, and by being about to inflict another heavy stroke on Babylon, quieted God's spirit with respect to Chaldea, generally mentioned as lying to the north of Judea. The *white* horses denoted the Macedonian empire, and perhaps the favourable aspect it bore to the Jews, as the black horses might signify that the empire which they figured should be inauspicious to them, as was the case under some of the successors of Cyrus. The *spotted bay* horses seem to figure the various forms of the Roman government, under kings, consuls, dicta-

tors, and emperors. It penetrated southward (6) to Egypt and Assyria, and had all the restlessness imputed to it in ver. 7th.—The *two brazen mountains* may be emblematical of God's firm and immutable decrees, by which he governs the world and all its empires.

The other vision in this chapter (9—15) may refer in its primary sense to the establishment of the civil and religious polity of the Jews under Joshua and Zerubbabel; but relates in a fuller sense to the Messiah, and to that spiritual kingdom of which he was to be both King and High-Priest. In him, all these types and figures were verified; in him all the promises are *Yea* and *Amen*.

VII. Some Jews being sent from those who remained at Babylon to enquire of the Priests and Prophets at Jerusalem, whether they were still bound to observe those fasts which had been appointed on occasion of the destruction of Jerusalem, and kept during the captivity, the Prophet is commanded to take this opportunity of enforcing upon them the weightier matters of the law, judgment, and mercy, that they might not incur such calamities as befell their fathers. He intimates withal that in their former fasts they had regarded themselves more than God, and that they had rested too much on the performance of external rites, although the former Prophets had largely insisted on the superior excellence of moral duties.

VIII. In this chapter, God promises the continuance of his favour to those who are returned from the captivity, so that upon the removal of his judgments,

the fasts they had observed during the captivity, may be now converted to so many occasions of rejoicing. He likewise promises in due time a general restoration of his people, and the enlargement of the Church by the accession of the Gentiles. The conclusion of the chapter intimates further, that the Jews, after their restoration, will be instrumental in converting many other nations (comp. Rom. xiv. 15, 16).

IX. This and the five remaining chapters of this work, though annexed to the prophecies of Zechariah, and bearing the same title, (owing perhaps to their having been first written on the same scroll of parchment), seem not to be his. The three first do not suit his time, but agree with that of Jeremiah, to whom a citation from them in the New Testament is ascribed (Matt. xxvii. 9, 10).—The three last chapters form a distinct prophecy, and were written after the death of Josiah (chap. xii. 11), and probably before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (xiii. 2—6), but by what Prophet, if not by Jeremiah, is uncertain. There are two citations from them in the New Testament, chap. xii. 10, and xiii. 7.

Syria, Phœnicia, and Palestine, were conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, and afterwards by Alexander. Some apply the beginning of this chapter (1—7) to the one event, and some to the other. The close of ver. 7th relates to the number of Philistines that should become proselytes to Judaism; (See Jos. Antiq. xiv. 4): And ver. 8th, to the watchful providence of God over his temple in those troublesome times.

From this the Prophet passes on (9, 10) to that most eminent instance of God's goodness to his church and people, the sending of the Messiah with an account of the peaceable tendency and great extent of his kingdom. God then declares, that he has ratified his covenant with his people, delivered them from their captivity, and restored them to favour (11, 12). In consequence of this, victory over their enemies is promised them in large and very lofty terms, with every other kind of prosperity (13—17). Judas Maccabeus gained several advantages over the troops of Antiochus, who was of Grecian or Macedonian descent. But, without excluding these events, it must be allowed that the terms of this prophecy are by much too strong to be confined to them. It therefore remains to be still fulfilled, after the future restoration of the Jews against the people of those countries, which anciently went under the name of Greece or Javan.

X. The promise of prosperity and plenty in the close of the preceding chapter, leads the Prophet to suggest next the means of obtaining them; supplication to Jehovah and not to idols, whose worship had already proved a fertile source of calamities (1—3). The rest of the chapter (like the preceding one) promises to the Jews a restoration to their own land under rulers and governors, victory over their enemies, and much increase and prosperity; and this in a manner so miraculous, that it is described (11) by allusions to the deliverance from Egypt.—Probably this chapter (like the foregoing) may point chiefly at some great revolu-

tion still future; possibly the same with that foretold by Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix.

XI. The first three verses of this chapter relate to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish polity, probably by the Babylonians; at least in the first instance, as the fourth verse speaks of the people thus threatened as the Prophet's charge. From the seventh verse, the Prophet gives an account of the manner in which he discharged his office, and the little value that was put on his labours. And this he does by symbolical actions, a common mode of instruction with the ancient Prophets (7—14). In the fifteenth verse, after the Prophet, on account of the intility of his labours, had broken the two crooks which were the true badges of his pastoral office, (to denote the disannulling of God's covenant with them and their consequent divisions and dispersions), he is directed to take instruments fit to hurt and destroy, perhaps an iron crook, scrip, and stones, to express by these symbols, the judgments which God was about to inflict on them by wicked rulers and guides, who should first destroy the flock, and in the end be destroyed themselves (15—17).

Let us now turn to the other side of the medal, and view this prophecy in another light, as we are authorised to do by scripture (Mat. xxvii. 7). In this view the Prophet, in the person of the Messiah, sets forth the ungrateful returns made to him by the Jews, when he undertook the office of a shepherd in guiding and governing them;—how they rejected him,

and valued him and his labours at the mean and contemptible price of thirty pieces of silver (the paltry sum for which Judas betrayed him). Upon which he threatens to destroy their city and temple, and to give them up to the hands of such guides and governors as should have no regard to their welfare.—What is there in the Old Testament that does not shadow Christ?

XII. The first part of this chapter (with several passages in chap. xiv), relate to an invasion that shall be made on the inhabitants of Judea and Jerusalem in the latter ages of the world, some time after the restoration and settlement of the Jews in their own land (comp. Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix. and Rev. xx. 9). It also describes, in very magnificent terms, the signal interposition of God in their favour. From this the Prophet proceeds in the latter part of the chapter (10—14) to describe the spiritual mercies of God in converting his people, and gives a very pathetic and affecting account of the deep sorrow of that people, when brought to a sense of their great sin in crucifying the Messiah, comparing it to the sorrow of a parent for his first-born and only son, or to the lamentations made for Josiah in the valley of Megidon (2 Cor. xxxv. 24, 25): A deep retired sorrow, which will render the mourners for a season insensible to all the comforts and enjoyments of the most endearing society.

XIII. After the conversion and humiliation of the Jews, foretold in the preceding chapter, they are here

promised the full pardon of their sins, and a deliverance from idolatry and false prophets; insomuch that none should be found to wear any mark in honour of an idol; if they should have any, it was only to be that of the master whom they served. To this custom ver. 6th is generally supposed to allude; although some understand it of the wounds of our Saviour. Be this as it may, the next verse we know refers to him (Mat. xxvi. 31) and speaks of his death, and of the persecution of his disciples. The last two verses may also refer to those Jewish converts to Christianity who survived the calamities which their country suffered from the Romans.

XIV. The first and second verses of this chapter relate to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and the calamities consequent on that event. But then in the third verse the subject changes, and God threatens destruction to the enemies of his people, the descendants of those nations who fought under the Roman standard, and who will be confederated with Gog and Magog when this vengeance overtakes them (Ezekiel xxxviii. 39 and Rev. xx. 8, 9). He will display his power in their behalf, in a manner so astonishing and miraculous, (perhaps by a glorious appearing of the Messiah, 4,) that even they themselves, and much more, their enemies shall be struck with terror (5). Their natural prosperity shall then be permanent and unmixed (6, 7), and they shall be made the instruments of converting other nations to the faith of the Messiah (8, 9). The great increase and prosperity of the Christian

church, the New Jerusalem, is then described (in terms accommodated to Jewish ideas), and the most signal vengeance denounced against all her enemies (10—19). From that happy period God's name will be honoured in every thing, and his worship reverently observed in the minutest circumstances (20, 21).

MALACHI.

MALACHI, the last of the Prophets of the Old Testament lived some time after the rebuilding of the temple and city, probably about the latter end of the times of Ezra and Nehemiah, when zeal and piety were much decayed, worship corrupted, and many sins prevailing among priests and people. For these the Prophet reproves and threatens them; but encourages the godly, who in such bad times continued faithful. He then speaks more distinctly of the coming of Christ in the flesh, and of his forerunner John the Baptist; till which time they were carefully to observe the Law, and look for no further succession of Prophets.

CHAP. I. This chapter begins with shewing the great and free favour which God had manifested to the Israelites, above what he had done to the Edomites, who are threatened with further marks of the Divine displeasure;—alluding perhaps to the calamities which they suffered from Judas Maccabeus and John

Hircanus (1 Mac. 5. 65 and Jos. Antiq. xiii. 9. 1). God then reproaches his people, and especially their priests, for their ungrateful returns to his distinguished goodness (6). They are particularly charged with sacrificing the refuse of beasts (7—9), for which God threatens to reject them (10), and choose other nations who will show more reverence to his name and worship than they, who are again reproved and threatened (11—14).

II. This chapter continues to reprove the priests for their unfaithfulness in their office, for which they are threatened to be deprived of their share of the sacrifice (the shoulder), and rewarded only with ignominy and ordure (1—3). The degeneracy of the order is then complained of, and they are again threatened (4—9). The rest of the chapter reproves the people for marrying strange and idolatrous women, and multiplying divorces, with all their consequent distress, in order to make way for such illicit alliances. Comp. Neh. x. 30 and xiii. 33. &c.

III. In allusion to the custom of sending pioneers to prepare the way for the march of an Eastern monarch, the coming of Christ's forerunner is described, and then the coming of Christ himself (1), with the terrible judgments which were to accompany that event, in order to refine and purify his people and his priests (2—6). The following verses reprehend them for withholding the legal tithes and offerings, with large promises in case of their repentance and amendment (7—12). The Prophet expostulates then with the

people for their hard and prophane speeches against the conduct of Providence, and declares God will one day make a fearful and final distinction between the righteous and the wicked, whose different characters are in the mean time carefully recorded (13—18).

IV. This chapter continues the same subject, threatening God's awful judgments on the wicked, and promising salvation to the pious, under a future and approaching dispensation (1—3). And then with a solemnity becoming the last of the Prophets, he closes the sacred Canon with enjoining the strict observance of the Law, till the forerunner already promised should appear, in the spirit of Elias, to introduce the Messiah and begin a new and everlasting Dispensation (4—6).

THE END.



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